

THE **COSTCO** **CONNECTION**

December 2011 • Volume 26 • Number 12

A lifestyle magazine for
Costco members

The many
missions of
the American
Red Cross

The
sign
of life

22

THE COSTCO CONNECTION



NEW!

The latest
cookbook is here:
*A Decade of Cooking
The Costco Way 2011*

Welcome to *The Costco Connection Online Edition*

- Complete a brief [Reader Survey](#) and enter a drawing to receive a Costco Cash card.
- New: [Costco Beer, Wine and Spirits Locator](#)
- For advertising information about *The Costco Connection*, select: [Media Kit \(lite\)](#) [BPA/ABC](#)
- Click here to receive information about [The Costco Connection](#) reader panel.
- Electronic editions of Costco publications are available here in the "Resources" section. Browse, share and print these pages from wherever you have Internet access. You can even download an entire book as a PDF.
- To the left there is a tab called "Resources." Here's where Costco members will find information that they will likely refer to often, such as the [Kirkland Signature Wine Connection](#), all of the *Costco Way* cookbooks (also on right), location guides for [Gas Stations](#) and [Business Centers](#), and a beginners guide to [digital photos](#).



Smart Cooking



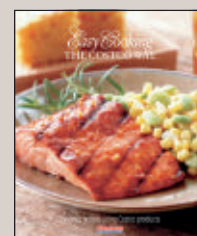
Home Cooking



In The Kitchen



Favorite Recipes



Easy Cooking



Creative Cooking



Cooking in Style



Cooking



Entertaining



2007 Almanac



2008 Almanac



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- B. Aquamarine & Diamond Earrings 14-Kt. White Gold. Item #145924
- C. Amethyst & Diamond Necklace 14-Kt. Yellow Gold. Item #576174
- D. Multicolor Sapphire Earrings 14-Kt. White Gold. Item #564693
- E. Amethyst & Diamond Ring 14-Kt. White Gold. Item #453565
- F. Garnet & Diamond Ring 14-Kt. Yellow Gold. Item #453498
- G. Peridot & Diamond Ring 14-Kt. White Gold. Item #576204
- H. Trillion-Cut Amethyst Stud Earrings 14-Kt. White Gold. Item #433330
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*Savings data represents information provided by Costco members who became new auto insurance policyholders with Ameriprise Auto & Home Insurance and reported annual savings between 3/1/11 and 8/31/11. Individual savings and experience may vary based upon a variety of factors including, but not limited to, driving experience and type of automobile insured.

11EX1342 10/11

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WAREHOUSE/COSTCO.COM | AVAILABLE NOW

Red Cross to the rescue

COVER STORY

After 130 years, and weathering its own internal storms, the charity continues to be a vital aid to those in greatest need.

BY WILL FIFIELD



Rescues large-scale and small—Gail McGovern (above), CEO of the American Red Cross, is involved in them all.

DANIEL CIMA/AMERICAN RED CROSS

FEATURES

- 19 Hiring myths**
The truth about running a business with employees
BY RHONDA ABRAMS
- 27 Cider house rules**
Martinelli's celebrates 143 years of bubbling success.
BY CLAIRE SYKES
- 30 Creative Cooking: Supper clubs**
What better way to celebrate friendship and great food?
BY DEBI SHAWCROSS
- 35 Just the facts, ma'am**
How does the venerable *Consumer Reports* magazine remain viable?
BY STEPHANIE E. PONDER
- 57 Gadget gift guide**
Last-minute ideas for the techie on your list
BY TIM TALEVICH
- 71 Electronic health records**
Doctors can benefit from EHRs, and so can patients.
BY JESSICA CERRETANI

DEPARTMENTS

- 5 Front End**
By Ginnie Roeglin and David W. Fuller
- 7 Dialogue**
Letters from our readers
- 9 Fresh Views**
Brain food for the entrepreneur
- 11 Consumer Connection**
By David Horowitz
- 13 Tech Connection**
By Marc Saltzman
- 14 Informed Debate**
Is it OK to thank people by email?
- 43 Arts & Entertainment**
Book buyers' picks
- 65 For Your Health**
Seasonal affective disorder
+ Winter and arthritis
+ Malaria vaccine
- 86 Member Connection**
Every member has a story.

INSIDE COSTCO

- 78 Buying Smart: Costco Concierge Services**
This free technical support center can help members get their electronics set up right.
BY PAT VOLCHOK
- 82 What's New**
- 84 Special Events**
- 85 Services Update**

SPECIAL SECTION

Arts & Entertainment

- Andrea Bocelli 37
- Book Pick:
The Night Circus 39
- The Help* 41
- Kathy Bates 45
- Helen Mirren 47
- And more!



GILES KEYTE

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Chevrolet and GMC Limited-Time Offer

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from the publisher's desk

Ginnie Roeglin

THE HOLIDAYS ARE upon us! Whether you celebrate Hanukkah, Christmas or Kwanzaa or simply enjoy this month's focus on sharing time with family and friends, this is truly a special season of the year.

As you can imagine, it's a busy time at Costco, in the warehouses and on Costco.com. Our buyers have worked around the clock to make sure the items our members are looking for are available.

We know these holidays can sneak up on you before you are prepared, and Costco is here to help. If there are gift recipients on your list who still need to be crossed off, you'll find plenty of ideas in this month's issue. Is there a techie in your life? Gadget gifts abound, including 3D and wireless-ready TVs, Blu-ray Disc players, complete home theater packages, cameras, tablets and wireless speaker systems. For information on these and more, see "Gadgets for Gifts," on page 57, and check out the "Instant Savings" on many tech items, beginning on page 52.

And to help you with any technical issues you may have with setting up your new electronics, Costco's Concierge Services offers free tech support to all Costco members. Buying Smart's Pat Volchok delivers the story on page 78.

In our Arts & Entertainment section, you'll find fascinating interviews with Helen Mirren, Kathy Bates and Andrea Bocelli, who talk about *Prime Suspect*, *Midnight in Paris* and *One Night in Central Park*, respectively, all on DVDs available at Costco. Additionally, the author of *The Help* and the director of the movie version, along with actress Emma Stone, describe how this story came to be. Both the book and the DVD are available at Costco, and there is an exciting giveaway as well (page 41). Be sure to read Pennie Clark Ianicello's Book Pick (*The Night Circus*, page 39) for this month, and find out more about the puzzle master who creates dramatic jigsaw-puzzle cityscapes (page 49).

Finally, a reminder that if you are ordering from Costco.com, standard three-day shipping will deliver by Friday, December 23, if shipped by December 20, and that, due to size constraints, not all items are available for three-, two- or next-day air.

From all of us at Costco, happy holidays! ☺



Ginnie Roeglin is Senior Vice President, E-Commerce and Publishing, and Publisher of *The Costco Connection*.

from the editor's desk

David W. Fuller



David W. Fuller is Assistant Vice President, Publishing, and Editor of *The Costco Connection*.

YOU MAY HAVE noticed that Costco has no motto. It's unusual among large companies not to have one. But mottos tend to be self-adulatory, and although those of us here are very proud of what we do, we tend as a company to shy away from tooting our own horn. Nevertheless, I've always felt that if Costco were to have a motto, a good candidate would be "Divide and conquer" or, perhaps, "Do the math."

Either one would be a reference to Costco's greatest contribution to the world of merchandising: its persistent and intense concentration on value over price. Costco is not the first discount merchandiser or the first retailer to stress consistently low prices. But Costco has distinguished itself by its focus on the discipline of providing the best value for each dollar spent.

That's where those proposed mottos come in. In order to understand the value in many of the products Costco sells, one has to do a little math—division in particular. As obvious as that may seem to you, I can assure you I have seen comments in the press and on blogs calling our prices high. These seem to be written by people who have not done the math.

When converted to units (whether pounds, ounces or pieces), the target is always for Costco's prices to be the best available. Other elements also go into the value equation, though, including subjective product attributes such as taste, design and bonus features. All are scrutinized and evaluated by our corporate buyers as part of the value built into the price.

Thinking about this while driving to work today, I noticed a motto on a van in the lane ahead of me: "Quality, it's a matter of pride." How true. Yet how wrong that would be if the *d* in "pride" were replaced with a *c*. ☺



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Need help entertaining for the holidays?



If you missed receiving a free copy of our 10th cookbook in the warehouse November 25–27, starting November 28 you can find an electronic version of it and all of our previous cookbooks in *The Costco Connection Online Edition*. Go to Costco.com and search “Costco cookbook.” Each book is fully searchable and can be downloaded to your computer as a PDF.



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12TR0301 11/11

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Debate goes on

In response to the November Debate, "Should the mortgage interest deduction be phased out?"

YES. The tax code caters to too many special interests. The end result is that the market adjusts and we have higher housing costs.

*Randy Soderholm
Reston, Virginia*

NO. I think it's important to keep the cost of home buying down. If [the MID] is removed, it will make it much more difficult to purchase a home and maintain it.

*Karl White
Austin, Texas*

Member comments

Wrong type of diabetes

The lifestyle changes the author refers to in the article ["Diabetes-proof your life," November 2011] can make vast improvements in the health of people with Type 2 diabetes.

But they are not sufficient to address Type 1 diabetes (formerly called "Juvenile Diabetes;" www.jdrf.org), a serious autoimmune disease that affects as many as 3 million Americans of all ages. In Type 1 diabetes, the body's immune system attacks and destroys the insulin-producing cells of the pancreas. It cannot be prevented by lifestyle changes, and cannot be treated without medication. There is not yet a cure.

*Susan Porjes
Mililani, Hawaii*

Dork redemption

I have to commend Rachel Renee Russell for being able to fulfill her writing dream ["Dork Diaries," November 2011]. I was a dork in school but I also wrote a lot, mostly poetry and short stories. My teachers loved what I submitted and recently I ran across a notebook full of my treasured writings.

Like Rachel, in college my freshman

English teacher seemed to hate everything I wrote. Unfortunately it utterly discouraged me and the inspiration I used to feel left me. It would be many years before I wrote anything again. Eventually I got the courage to enter a contest with a poem and a story; I won both categories!

I never did write "the great American novel" but I did feel vindicated.

*Kolleen Peterson
Brush Prairie, Washington*

Natural beauty

How refreshing and real to see Caroline Kennedy's face—without the false, plastic look of Botox, no surgical enhancement and free of the dreadful airbrush—on the cover of *The Costco Connection* [November 2011]. It's so nice to see a woman secure enough to show her true beauty. Of course, she's beautiful. Look at her parents!

*Tracy Simmons
Nashville, Tennessee*

Recipe heaven

I just had to respond to the recent November issue. I loved all the recipes. Besides giving me new ways to cook old favorites, it gave me ideas for my holiday cooking. I can't wait to try the Holiday Peanut Butter Cutouts [page 34] with my granddaughters. The Green Beans with Orange Essence and Toasted Pecans [page 32] sounds like a way to "fancy up" the tried and true standard green bean recipe, but not overly complicated.

*Jan Tyger
Camas, Washington*

Cruisetouring

My husband and I just returned from a cruisetour to Alaska, so when I opened the latest *Costco Connection* and saw the article about cruisetours ["Don't just cruise, cruisetour!" October 2011], I had to smile.

The cruisetour materialized into a wonderful trip. Without using a cruisetour, we wouldn't have been able to get to know Alaska as a whole. It provided a glimpse of possibilities and a picture of a future vacation. I highly recommend the cruisetour followed by independent travel.

*Dita Baranek
New Castle, Colorado*

Have something to say?

Readers are encouraged to submit letters to our editors on any topic or issue covered in *The Connection*. Please include your full name and phone number or address. Send an email to dialogue@costco.com; or write to: Dialogue, *The Costco Connection*, P.O. Box 34088, Seattle, WA 98124-1088; or fax to (425) 313-6718. The editors reserve the right to edit letters for publication.

Availability of products advertised in *The Connection*

ALL PRODUCTS advertised are carried at Costco warehouses unless otherwise noted; however, products may not be available in all warehouse locations.

- Products are scheduled to be available during *The Connection's* month of publication and are noted as in warehouse "early in month" (1st to 10th), "mid-month" (11th to 21st) or "late in month" (22nd to 31st).
- All ads indicate whether a product is available in the warehouse, on Costco.com or both.
- Prices are usually not listed in the advertising because they have not been finalized at the time of printing and may vary from one part of the country to another due to shipping costs. We hope that members know to check Costco first when comparison shopping.
- To keep prices low, Costco does not offer a telephone service allowing members to call in for prices or product availability.
- Shop early in the month for best selection on seasonal items.
- Costco.com carries few of the products available at the warehouses, but offers 3,500 additional items, including line extensions and supplemental products.



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Win a Costco Cash card worth \$50!

WHAT DO you think of this issue of *The Connection*? Tell us and you could be one of five winners of a \$50 Costco Cash card! Take a moment to complete our anonymous reader feedback survey by going to Costco.com and searching "Costco Connection Magazine." Click "Reader Survey" on the welcome page. Upon completion, you will have the option to enter the drawing.



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PAUL AND SARAH EDWARDS: LIFESTYLES FOR THE MILLENNIUM



Paul and Sarah Edwards (www.elmstreeteconomy.com) are the authors of 17 print books and a new BarChart entitled *How to Start a Home-Based Business*.

MARY ANN HALPIN PHOTOGRAPHY

When thinking big needs to start small

WE ARE ALWAYS encouraged to dream big—to go for our dreams. These are important messages for a successful venture, but sometimes we get carried away and don't give our dreams time to firmly take root.

Recently, a colleague dreamed of launching an annual alternative-energy conference for the towns in his region. He had a great

concept and access to both the funds and the personnel to carry it out. He went all out.

He planned a three-day event with speakers, workshops, an exhibit hall, food and entertainment. Vendors signed up. Community organizations lent their names. Facilities for a large crowd were committed. Ads and articles appeared in the local papers. Success seemed imminent.

But throughout the process several of his advisers had been skeptical. They weren't sure if there was sufficient interest or awareness in the region of the need for energy alternatives. They urged him to start smaller. Try an afternoon event, they urged, to test the drawing power of his idea and to give the region a taste of what a bigger kind of conference like this could bring to the region.

Our colleague remained undeterred. He

saw these naysayers as negative thinkers—small-minded folks who couldn't grasp the potential of what was possible.

The weekend of the event arrived and everything was spectacular—except the attendance. Those who came found it valuable, but the turnout was small. Vendors were disappointed. His workers were demoralized. The affiliating organizations were embarrassed.

Had he started small, none of this would have had to happen. Compacted into one afternoon, the small crowd would have seemed large and the event could easily have led to a daylong one the next year with plenty of time for word of mouth and the promise of more to come to build on. Funds from a successful small event could have been used to finance a larger one, and if it was a success too then an even larger one could have been planned the year after that. But failing so big damaged his efforts to do this again.

So let's dream big. Let's go for our dreams. But let's allow them time to grow into the full-blown success we envision. ☐

More in archives
On Costco.com, enter
"Connection." At Online Edition,
search "Paul and Sarah Edwards."

Mobile marketing for small businesses

AS TECHNOLOGY ADVANCES, mobile phones are taking on a greater role in consumers' lives. Because smartphones can now tell users where they are and what businesses are nearby, opportunities for small-business owners to take advantage of mobile marketing are growing tremendously, according to Costco member Shelly Allen (www.ShellyAllenOnline.com), a small-business consultant. "In a recent survey by JiWire, more than half of mobile users want to receive location-specific advertising, and nearly 40 percent want location-based coupons," says Allen.

Allen explains that this trend is creating a stir with many small-business owners, who wonder how they can tap into this new opportunity. However, just as many lack the time, budget, or tech savvy to develop and implement a mobile marketing strategy.

Fortunately, she says, there are a number of mobile marketing tools available that can help you attract customers on the go. Foursquare, Facebook Places and Yelp are three of the most popular, particularly for brick-and-mortar businesses that cater to local customers. These sites encourage users to "check in" with details being published on the business's Facebook page, and offer a variety of promotional tools and features that leverage word-of-mouth marketing.

"Beyond using social media sites that are geared to mobile users, developing a mobile-enabled website is a must for any business, both those with storefronts and those without," says Allen. "When you consider that there are now more mobile devices (smartphones, iPads and tablets) than PCs being sold, the need for your site to be optimized for these devices is no longer just helpful—it's essential!"

What are the components of a website optimized for mobile devices?

- Faster page-load times
- Simplified navigation
- Improved readability
- Click-to-call button
- Map and directions

In most cases, Allen points out, mobile users don't want to peruse an entire website on their phone. Rather, they want basic information, directions to your location, and the ability to call with questions. Thus, a landing page with this information is typically all that's required to launch a successful mobile marketing presence.

"For a small investment in a mobile-enabled landing page," says Allen, "small-business owners can achieve a significant return on investment from mobile users who convert into paying customers." ☐



STEVEN LAIT



IMAGEZOO

Get ready, start up!

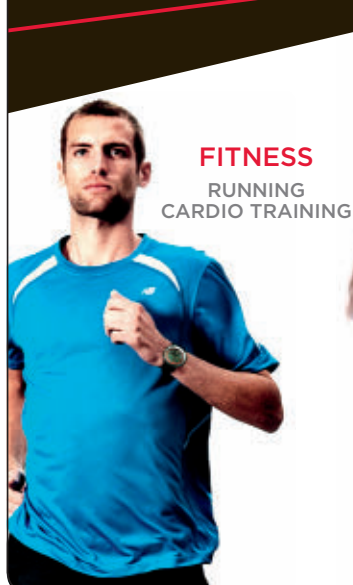
WITH SO MANY people unemployed, a new breed of entrepreneur has emerged—the "accidental entrepreneur." This is someone who stopped trying to find a job and decided to start his or her own business. According to the Kauffman Foundation (www.kauffman.org), 565,000 new businesses were created in 2010. Unfortunately, many new entrepreneurs do not have the training and experience necessary for success.

Research shows that people learn new concepts better in an educational forum that is combined with social interaction.

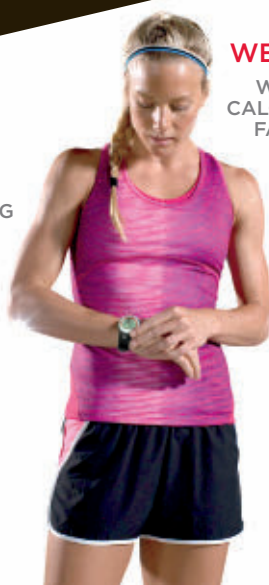
Tapping into this, American Express (www.openforum.com) and New York startup Veri (www.veri.com), a social learning platform, are providing Crash Courses (www.openforum.com/crash-courses).

Crash Courses' goal is to educate entrepreneurs on how to implement important business functions within their organizations—everything from "The Art of Hiring" to "Website Conversion." Courses give them the option to learn more on these topics while they collect IQ points to see where they stack up against others.

And it might just alleviate the loneliness of starting a business on one's own. ☐



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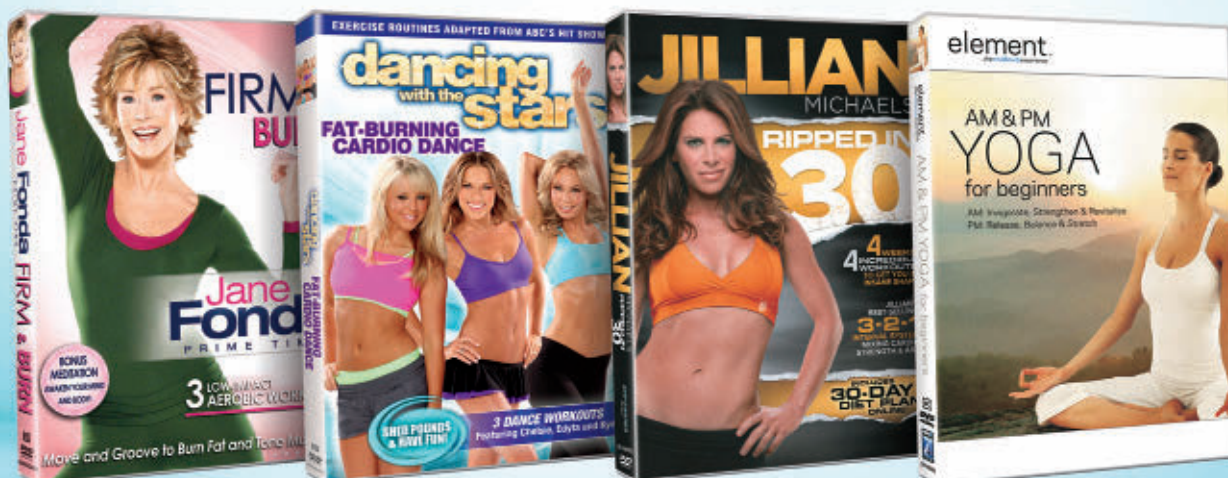
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Protect yourself from investment scams

EVERY YEAR Americans lose billions of dollars to investment scams. Because of the volatility of the stock market, many investors are looking for safe places to stick their money. Others are looking for ways to increase their portfolios quickly. On top of that, pay cuts, job losses and other challenges of a recession can make everyone more susceptible to schemes that take advantage of financial insecurity.

Here are some examples of common investment fraud:

Advance-fee fraud. A scammer will play on an investor's hope that he or she will be able to reverse a previous investment mistake involving the purchase of a low-priced stock. The scam generally begins with an offer to pay you an enticingly high price for worthless stock in your portfolio. To take the deal, you must send a fee in advance to pay for the service. But if you do so, you will never see that money, or any of the money from the deal, again.

Affinity fraud. Taking advantage of the tendency of people to trust others with whom they share similarities, scammers use their victim's religious or ethnic identity to gain their trust and then steal their life savings. The techniques range from "gifting" programs at churches to foreign exchange scams.

Internet fraud. All kinds of scams, from simple identity theft to a letter from Nigeria informing you of unclaimed funds to investment opportunities offered via email are perpetrated over the Internet.

Ponzi schemes. The formula is simple: Promise high returns to investors and use their money to pay previous investors. This is investment fraud in its purest form.

Prime bank schemes. Con artists promise investors triple-digit returns through access to the investment portfolios of the world's elite banks. In an effort to warn investors, the Federal Reserve pointed out that these don't exist.

Promissory notes. These short-term debt instruments are often sold by independent insurance agents and issued by little-known or nonexistent companies. They typically promise high returns, upward of 15 percent monthly, with little or no risk.

Senior investment fraud. Everything from Ponzi schemes, unregistered securities and promissory notes to charitable gift annuities are employed to con seniors out of their money.

Variable annuities. A variable annuity is a contract between you and an insurance company, under which the insurer agrees to make periodic payments to you. Annuities are often pitched to seniors through investment seminars, but regulators

say these products are unsuitable for many retirees. Variable annuities make sense only for consumers who can afford to have their investment locked up for 10 years or longer.

Here are some important tips on how to protect yourself when you make your next investment:

Don't be driven by emotion. Con artists work to control the conversation, talking fast, using exciting statements, promising big returns and acting like your friend. Scammers listen closely to your present economic situation and take advantage of your vulnerabilities. Beware of false promises and schemes that are too good to be true.

Don't be afraid to ask questions. Many times when you are investing, the terms may be complicated, and once the seller goes into all the fine details it is easy to be overwhelmed and confused. Ask questions, and don't be ashamed to ask for clarification. Also ask important questions of yourself: What do you expect to get from this investment? What risks are you willing to take?

Get a second opinion.

Get somebody who is not associated with the deal and has nothing to gain from it to evaluate the investment. Talk to someone who has made a similar deal or worked with the same seller.

Investment scammers prey on people's vulnerabilities. They target people who aren't motivated by greed, but by a desire for financial stability. Those who are looking to secure their retirement, leave something for their children or help put their children through college are often the most vulnerable. Arm yourself with the knowledge of these scams, and prepare yourself before making an investment in the future. [E]

Ask David Horowitz

I purchased a Mini Cooper from the Mini Cooper website. After I drove it for 50,000 miles with no problems at all, the engine fan began to make a whirring sound. However, this happened just a few miles after my 50,000-mile warranty expired. I went to the dealer, and after they checked the car they told me that since my warranty had expired it would cost \$7,000 to fix. What can I do?

Helen
Manhattan Beach, CA

The first thing to do is get the estimate double-checked by your local mechanic. Next, write out a detailed letter describing everything that has happened and everything that needs to

be fixed in order to make the car run again. Then, contact a representative from the corporate offices of Mini Cooper and explain your situation. Have the representative work with the dealer to fix your problems in a less expensive way. When you take your matter to the corporate division, a representative can often make an arrangement that your local dealer cannot. [E]



AMY CANTRELL

David Horowitz is a leading consumer advocate. Visit his blog at www.fightback.com. He is a frequent guest on radio and television stations. Consult your local listings for dates and times.

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Do you have a question for David?

Just log on to www.fightback.com and "Ask David." For a fee, he will personally respond to your problem if you follow the instructions printed on his website. (Costco members receive a rebate off the normal fee.) Questions and answers of the greatest interest to Costco members will be used in this column (with the permission of the contributor) and will be posted on www.fightback.com.



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Safety first

Protecting all your devices from online attacks

By Marc Saltzman

THOSE WHO OWN a computer, smartphone or tablet likely understand the importance of protecting their favorite digital device—and, perhaps more important, the information that resides on it—but only a third of us are actually taking the proper precautions to do so.

Unfortunately, there's no shortage of threats out there, be it nasty viruses and other malicious software ("malware") that can infect your computer or mobile device, or hackers and scammers who want to steal your valuable data.

"Our PCs, Macs and mobile devices today house a large number of valuable digital assets—everything from photos and music to personal and financial data," notes Todd Gebhart, co-president of McAfee, a leading security software company. "Losing these assets can be devastating, particularly given the money and time we invest in acquiring and using them."

Gebhart has also seen a growing abundance of cyber-criminal activity, perpetrated by people "out to pilfer sensitive information like credit card, bank account and Social Security numbers, with the goal of stealing your identity for financial gain."

In fact, McAfee is currently collecting nearly 2 million new malware samples each month and identifying 8,900 new malicious websites each day. Increasingly, this potentially damaging software is infecting mobile devices through websites or downloaded apps that might contain hidden files, on top of the many voice-, email- and text-based scams.

The good news, says Gebhart, is that people are becoming more aware of the need to protect their digital devices in our always-connected world. "They are hearing more about the loss of data, of identities, cyber-bullying and threats to child safety on the Internet," he explains.

Being aware is one thing, but acting on it is another. So, what to do? The following is a short checklist that should help you protect your devices, your information and your family.

Back up your data. First things first: Back up your important files on a regular basis, just in case they're compromised due to a malware attack, theft, fire or flood, or hardware malfunction. For your computer, pick up an external hard drive and make a backup of your irreplaceable digital photos and

camcorder footage, documents, important emails, contacts, calendar appointments, Web bookmarks and so forth.

To back up info on your smartphone or tablet, synchronize your device with your computer via USB cable or back up data to an online "cloud" service where it can be easily retrieved, if needed.

Use anti-malware programs.

The next step is to invest in good anti-malware software, which includes anti-virus and anti-spyware tools, and a two-way firewall. For example, McAfee All Access protects computers and mobile devices alike. Updates are usually handled automatically and pushed to your device, which will protect you from the latest threats as soon as they're identified.

Be safe and sensible. Consumers should also continue following online-safety best practices, says Gebhart. Along with regular backups, this includes using strong passwords (consisting of letters, numbers and symbols), downloading only from trusted resources and not leaving your devices unattended. Also, don't be tempted to act on email or text messages that ask you to reveal personal or financial information—they are likely a "phishing" attempt from a scam artist.

And concerning kids, rather than placing an Internet-connected computer in a child's room, keep it in a central location in the home, such as a kitchen, family room or any other highly trafficked area. Kids can feel independent while surfing online but not be "alone."

Also, remind them to never give out their address, phone number or other personal information, such as where they go to school—or upload any photos that might reveal this info. This applies to social networking sites (such as Facebook), instant messaging programs, chat rooms and emails. ☞



JOHN GOLDSTEIN

Ask Marc Saltzman

Questions about electronics or computers you purchased at Costco? Email them to: connection@costco.com.

Or send them to:
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Please include "Tech Connection" in the subject line. Marc will answer selected questions in this column. We regret that unpublished questions cannot be answered individually.

Marc Saltzman, a leading high-tech reporter, contributes to more than three dozen prominent publications, appears on radio and TV, and is the author of 14 books.

More in archives

On Costco.com, enter "Connection."
At *Online Edition*, search "Tech Connection."

The Costco Connection

Costco offers a variety of security programs from leading software makers in the warehouses and online at Costco.com. Also available are external hard drives to back up your valuable data.

Is it OK to thank people by email?

SHOWING GRATITUDE IS important in nurturing relationships, and those who prefer saying "thank you" by email say the practice is quick, convenient and fast becoming the norm. But critics argue there are times when email thank-yous are inappropriate and a phone call or card sent by regular mail is more appreciated. What do you think?



Find out more about this topic on the Web:

- www.netmanners.com/email-etiquette/what-about-thank-you-notes
- www.literatureandleisure.com/2011/09/manners-monday-thank-you
- www.oprah.com/oprahshow/thank-you-note-etiquette

YES

from members:

Douglas Gross
Anchorage, AK



It's less intrusive and you won't feel pressured or intimidated talking to a person.

Diane C. Milam
Winter Park, FL



Sincere appreciation can be expressed via email. Email is convenient, but that does not take away from the true meaning of the message.

Keith Howes
Hickman, CA



The average person gets eight negatives for every single praise. Any form of saying "thank you" is acceptable and encouraged.

NO

from members:

Laura Chandler
Burlington, CT



Tacky! If you know the home address you should hand-write a short thank-you always.

Clyde DeLoach
Fort Worth, TX



To establish a personal link, [send] a card.

Theresa Gonzales
West Linn, OR



There is nothing that takes the place of a handwritten thank-you. It is good manners, and technology can't change that.

from an expert in the field:



Philip Galanes writes *The New York Times* advice and manners column "Social Q's," and is the author of *Social Q's: How to Survive the Quirks, Quandaries and Quagmires of Today* (Simon & Schuster, 2011).

BACK IN THE olden days, folks wrote messages on cave walls and scraps of papyrus. Later, in the 15th century, Europeans began expressing gratitude on paper and delivering the notes by hand (or horseback, if they were dashing). This practice was revolutionized in the 1800s, with the advent of post offices. Thank-you notes could be mailed as far as postal services delivered.

See the pattern? Times change—often fueled by new technologies (first papyrus, then paper, then stamps). People were doing the same thing they always had, thanking each other. They were just doing it a little differently.

Nowadays, we have the Internet, our latest technological advancement. People frequently ask, in my advice column, whether it's OK to email thank-you notes. My knee-jerk reply was, "Heck, no! That's too easy." But think about it: Isn't that like criticizing people for mailing thank-you notes instead of delivering them by hand—as they did originally—or for using paper instead of papyrus? Making things harder doesn't make them better. And ignoring technology is silly. Expressing gratitude is the important thing. So, I've changed my mind. Emailed thank-you notes? Why not? Just consider some ground rules for sending thanks electronically.

Make them count. With all the time you're saving—no more hunting for stamps—take a moment to write a really thoughtful email. Typing "Thanks" and pressing "Send" is not a thank-you note.

Make them individual. No mass thanks to everyone who sent a birthday gift. Add handsome colors and artwork to make your emails special.

Make sure. Proofread for spelling and grammar, especially when thanking a prospective employer after a job interview. You want your would-be boss to see you at your best.

Make them like notes. When thanking old-fashioned folks (who might prefer a handwritten note), use websites like PaperlessPost.com to send emails that look like the real thing—with electronic envelopes and everything.

But the most important thing is thanking people, period! Whether we do it in person, over the phone, in cards or emails, let's remember to express our gratitude to the folks who do nice things for us. They deserve to be acknowledged, and we'll feel good about ourselves, too. [4]

from an expert in the field:



Daniel Post Senning is a spokesperson for the Emily Post Institute and co-author of the newly released book *Emily Post's Etiquette, 18th Edition: Manners for a New World* (www.emilypost.com).

WHEN I GET a handwritten letter, I'm excited to open it. The art of the postage stamp, the feel of the paper, the graphic quirks of a friend's handwriting: There is simply nothing as personal as a handwritten note. In a stack of bills and flyers, it's a treasure in a sealed packet, full of promise and potential. It is a visceral reminder of someone far away.

Good manners are about more than fulfilling bare-minimum social obligations. They are an opportunity for us to connect to the people in our lives in a meaningful way. In an increasingly informal digital world, to continue to pull out pen and paper is a way to distinguish yourself. The handwritten thank-you note speaks volumes simply as a medium and sends the message that you care enough to invest yourself personally in acknowledging another.

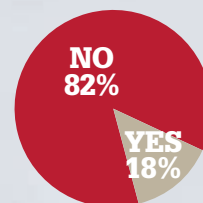
Would I ever send a digital thank-you for a gift I was given? No way. It just isn't enough—not personal enough, not weighty enough. You can't hold digital thanks in your hands the way you can hold a note. When was the last time you printed out an e-card? Right. Email is read and deleted. A mailed note is seen again and again on a desk or counter. Would you rather your thanks be remembered or deleted?

There are two common reasons people don't write thank-you notes. The biggest excuse is not having the materials at hand. Note cards or stationery that reflect your personality, a roll of stamps, pens and an address book—one trip to the store and you're all set.

The second excuse is not having time. A handwritten thanks is often as short as three sentences, just like an email. If you want to talk about your bike trip last summer, do it in a letter. The thank-you note is special; it's to express your appreciation, so keep the focus there. Does it take longer to address and stamp an envelope than to click "send"—yes, but by about one minute. A minute well spent to say thanks well.

Being part of a society means knowing how to be appropriate to a situation. Handwritten notes still have a personality, warmth and, when needed, gravitas that computer screens don't. And questions of appropriateness aside, people still enjoy opening them. More than anything, that tells me they have lasting value. So, send a little joy someone's way! [4]

NOVEMBER DEBATE RESULTS: Should the mortgage interest deduction (MID) be phased out?



Percentage reflects votes received by November 14, 2011.

• • • • •

OCTOBER DEBATE RESULTS:

Should paid sick leave be mandatory?

YES: 43% NO: 57%

Percentage reflects votes received by October 31, 2011. Results may reflect Debate being picked up by blogs.



See Dialogue pages for more debate responses

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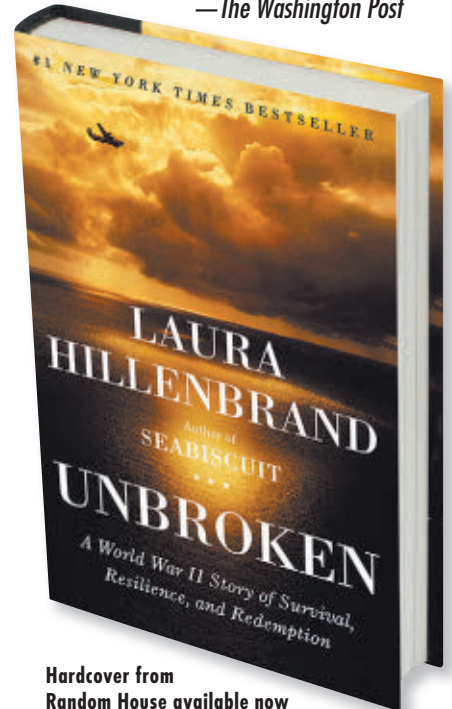
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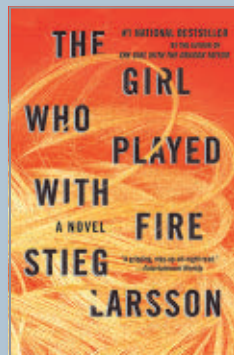


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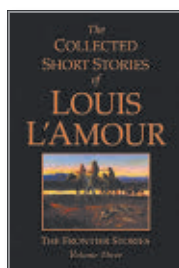
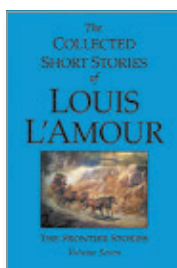
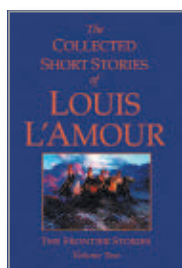
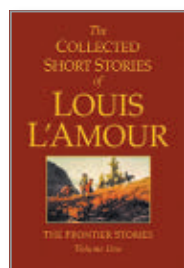
A score that can only be settled in blood

Diana Gabaldon returns to her hugely popular Lord John Grey series in her captivating new novel, *The Scottish Prisoner*. In 1760 a paroled prisoner of war, Jamie Fraser, is living a life of misery in the remote Lake District when he's summoned by aristocrat, soldier, and occasional spy Lord John Grey. The Greys need Jamie to help them in their cause, despite the fact that he's sworn off politics, fighting and war. In order to protect himself and keep his secrets safe, Jamie is forced to help the Greys, but they have secrets of their own—secrets that may take much more than just his liberty.

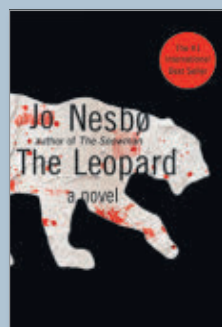
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decision to take her off life support. As her husband and their two troubled children gather to say their goodbyes, they discover someone hasn't been told—Joanie's lover. Knowing they owe it to the living and the dead, the threesome set out on a journey of discovery and unforeseen humor in *The Descendants*.

A masterful re-creation of the world of *Pride and Prejudice*

Death Comes to *Pemberley*



P. D. James

Hardcover from Knopf on sale December 6

In 1803 Darcy and Elizabeth are settling into their “happily ever after,” comfortable and secure with two adorable sons—and Jane and her husband, Bingley, making their home just down the road. However, old sins and misunderstandings are rekindled on the eve of the annual Autumn Ball when an uninvited guest arrives late in the evening, screaming that her husband has been murdered. P.D. James fuses her lifelong passion for the works of Jane Austen with her flair for writing sharp detective fiction in *Death Comes to Pemberley*.

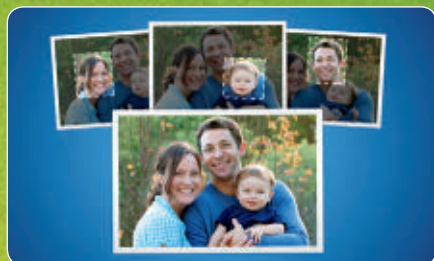
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Hiring myths

Myth: I don't have enough money to hire full-time employees.

Reality: Start small by hiring part-time employees or using independent contractors for specific projects.

Myth: I must offer employees a whole range of costly benefits.

Reality: Legally, the number of benefits you're required to offer is small; offer benefits to attract and retain the best employees.

Myth: I'll have to pay payroll taxes as well as salaries or wages.

Reality: True. So budget for payroll taxes when hiring employees. You'll have no payroll taxes if you can legally use independent contractors.

Myth: I don't have space for an employee.

Reality: Many businesses have employees who telecommute at least part of the time.

Myth: Managing other people will take up too much of my time.

Reality: You should have more time for doing work that you're best at—work that makes you more money.

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Hiring myths debunked

Truth and myths about having employees

By Rhonda Abrams

YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS to grow, and you know you need help. Sitting around the coffee shop, you confide to your friends that you're about to hire your first employee, and they warn you about all the terrible things that are going to happen to you once you're an employer. Can this all be true?

No, not really. There are lots of myths about hiring and getting help for your small business. Let's take a look at some of them.

One of the biggest misconceptions is that hiring means a full-time employee. Let's clear that up. You can put your toe in the hiring waters with a part-time employee or even a contractor for specific projects or independent tasks. My first employee worked 10 hours a week at \$10 an hour. But, boy, did that help me expand my business.

That leads to another myth: that employees are just too expensive. Of course, hiring people does cost you, but, like every investment in your business, it should help you make more money. I'm guessing that you currently spend a lot of your time on tasks that don't produce income, or that you don't have enough time to spend finding new clients or customers. A time-to-hire light bulb went off for me when I realized I was spending my valuable time on routine administrative tasks or waiting in line at the post

office instead of working on billable client projects.

Many people are reluctant to hire their first employees because they're afraid they'll have to spend their time either managing their employees or dealing with paperwork and taxes. Neither needs to be true. Sure, at the start, you'll have to spend some time training and, if you're a first-time employer, setting up routine operations and systems. But with the right person or people, you'll have more time to do the things that make you more money.

As for the paperwork? New services, such as online payroll, make it easier and less expensive than ever to deal with the red tape of having employees.

What about space? One common myth that stops many businesspeople, especially consultants, independent sales reps and sole practitioners, from hiring is that they work from home or don't have a large enough office to accommodate employees. My first employee worked at my kitchen table! Nowadays, many employees can work remotely, from their home, much of the time.

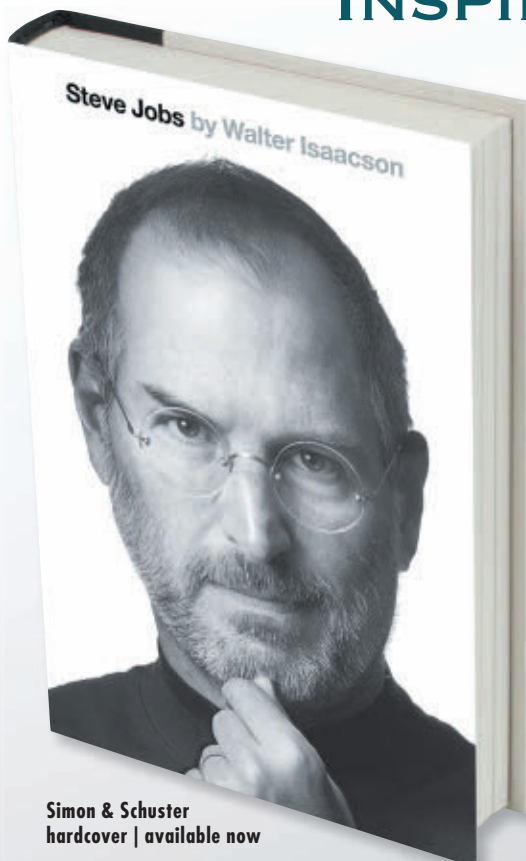
If you want to grow your business, you can't do it alone. Hiring an employee, even a part-timer or a contractor, can lead to financial and personal growth. I've grown my business through hiring, and you can too! ☑

Rhonda Abrams has started four successful companies. Currently, she heads The Planning Shop (www.planningshop.com), a publisher specializing in entrepreneurship and small business.

The Costco Connection

Costco offers online payroll services to Costco members, through Intuit. For information, visit Costco.com and click on "Services."

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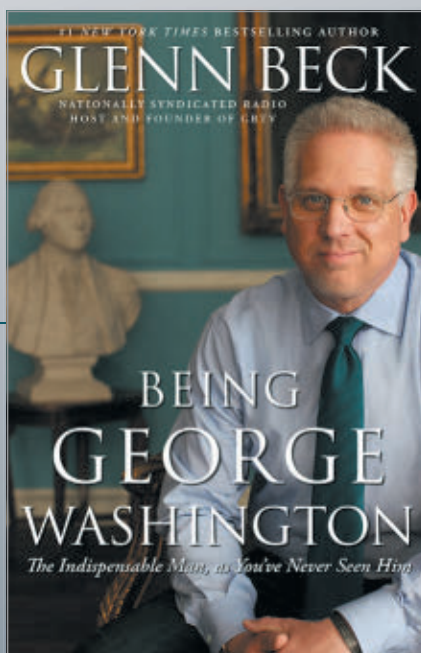
At a time when America is looking for ways to sustain its innovative edge, Steve Jobs stands out as the ultimate icon of inventiveness and applied imagination. Based on more than 40 interviews with Jobs, conducted over two years—as well as interviews with family members, adversaries, friends, competitors, and colleagues—master biographer Walter Isaacson has written the definitive look into the roller-coaster life of a true revolutionary. Although Jobs cooperated with the book, he asked for no control over what was written—nothing is off-limits. A candid biography that is as surprising as the man himself, *Steve Jobs* will be the book everyone is talking about this winter.

More than a story of recovery

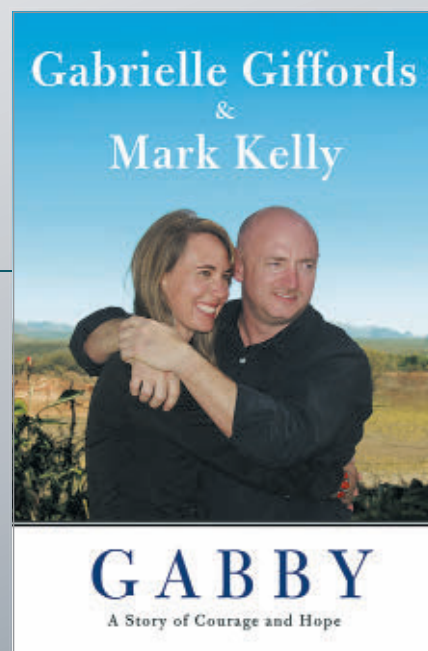
From one of the most beloved couples in recent American history comes a poignant story of romance, risk-taking and public service. Written with *The Last Lecture* co-author Jeffery Zaslow, *Gabby*—the joint memoir of Rep. Gabrielle Giffords and her husband, retired astronaut Mark Kelly—is a deeply personal account of their life together, the courage they tapped after a gunman nearly took her life, and the hope that they have for the future.

Looking back, to look forward

As the country gears up for the 2012 election, Glenn Beck takes a look at our founding fathers to find out what originally made America great. In *Being George Washington*, Beck explores our nation's first president, describing how his values are especially important to us today. Combining biography and Washington's own writings with his trademark insights, Beck shows us how we can learn from the great man who once united a hopelessly divided country.



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**American
Red Cross**

An interview with Gail McGovern, CEO of the American Red Cross

By Will Fifield

IN 2008, TWO WEEKS into Gail McGovern's new role as CEO of the American Red Cross, the Sichuan earthquake struck China.

She was fresh from her previous job as a faculty member at Harvard Business School, and the idea of responding to a true disaster was still very academic. Being called to the scene of that earthquake, in which an estimated 68,000 people were killed, "fundamentally changed me," she remembers.

A young schoolgirl McGovern met in Sichuan still stands out for her. The girl told her through an interpreter that she and her classmates had been outside painting with watercolors when the earthquake hit. The weight of McGovern's new job settled on her as she viewed what was left of the girl's school in a heap behind her. Two hundred children had been buried alive in it.

"You stand there as a parent, as a human being, and you realize how easily it could have been you or someone you love," McGovern tells *The Connection*. The image of the girl's face stays with her—literally. She took a photo of the girl with her BlackBerry and put it up on her refrigerator.

"I look at it when I have a frustrating day at work and say to myself, 'But this is what you're doing all this for,'" she says.

A helping hand

Since its inception in 1881, the American Red Cross has been the nation's largest private relief agency. Through its volunteer workforce of more than half a million, it responds to some 70,000 disasters each year, ranging from domestic house fires to large-scale natural disasters in the U.S. and abroad.

The American Red Cross is also the nation's largest blood supplier, collecting from about 4 million people each year. It trains more than 15 million people annually in the skills necessary to effectively respond to emergencies. It helps thousands of active-duty U.S. service members who

When the going gets tough

Gail McGovern at a glance

IN 2008 GAIL MCGOVERN replaced Mark W. Everson, a former IRS commissioner, as CEO of the American Red Cross. McGovern was hired, in part, because of her successful experience with fundraising. She held top management positions at AT&T and Fidelity Investments, and serves on the board of trustees of Johns Hopkins University and the board of directors of DET Energy. *Fortune* magazine listed her among its 50 most powerful women in corporate America in 2000 and 2001. She joined the faculty of the Harvard Business School in June 2002.

GAIL MCGOVERN PHOTO: DENNIS DRENNER/AMERICAN RED CROSS TRUCK IMAGE: DANIEL CIMA/AMERICAN RED CROSS BACKGROUND IMAGE: BOB CAREY/AMERICAN RED CROSS

'Tis the season

THIS TIME OF YEAR is characterized by giving. We exchange gifts with family and friends, and many are moved to contribute to their communities through donating to charities and humanitarian organizations. Since 1993 Costco has donated \$40 million to the American Red Cross through contributions from its employees, its members and its charitable budget. Visit www.redcross.org to donate or learn more about this organization's valuable work.



DANIEL CIMA/AMERICAN RED CROSS

are separated from their families stay connected. And, as part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, a global network of 186 national societies, the American Red Cross helps protect human life and health and alleviate human suffering, without discrimination based on nationality, race, sex, religious beliefs, class or political opinion.

The American Red Cross raises more than 60 percent of its funding through compensation for the blood services it offers and nearly 30 percent comes from donations. The government contributes about 2 percent of the organization's funding. The rest comes from fees it collects for the classes it offers and miscellaneous sources.

The Costco Connection recently met McGovern at a hotel in Portland, Oregon, to discuss her work with the American Red Cross.

The Costco Connection: When the Red Cross hits a disaster scene, what's the standard order of operation?

Gail McGovern: That's a great question, and it has a very complicated answer. We're part of 186 Red Cross Societies around the globe. There's a federation that coordinates us. The federation will call us when a society needs help. In China [after the 2008 Sichuan earthquake], for instance, they said, "We don't need volunteers. We have 138,000 volunteers already." Frankly, they didn't need cash either, because there's a rising middle class there and people were giving donations. They asked for tents. So we raised \$30 million and converted it into tents, shipped them over to China, where people assembled them, and housed hundreds of thousands of people. In Haiti, on the other hand, they said, "We are completely overwhelmed." Each disaster is a little different.

CC: *How do you coordinate relief efforts with other nonprofits?*

GM: Domestically, for the most part, we share a volunteer force. So, you wind up seeing people with Salvation Army T-shirts, maybe a Southern Baptist T-shirt, someone with an NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] shirt. We don't just rely on our own volunteers—we have memorandums of understanding with almost every single branch of the faith-based community in one way or another. Our goal is for our volunteers to reflect the community we're serving. Locals understand the people there; they understand the roads and how to navigate the area, and they understand cultural sensitivities.

On a house fire, however, we respond with a comfort kit. We meet them immediately, start smothering the family with love. We get them hotel vouchers. We get them food. We give them [access to] psychosocial services so they can get through it. We check in on them until they're back on their feet.

In a larger domestic disaster, such as the tornadoes in Alabama, we mobilize volunteers from all over the place. There were hundreds of people in shelters, and we needed help organizing, help feeding and help registering. We also sent mental-health counselors.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

The four corners of the cross

ANDREW YATES/AMERICAN RED CROSS



Blood

Every two seconds someone in the U.S. needs blood. The American Red Cross is the nation's largest blood supplier, collecting from about 4 million people each year. It provides blood for patients in nearly 3,000 hospitals across the U.S.

DENNIS DRENNER/AMERICAN RED CROSS



Military services

The Red Cross helps thousands of active-duty U.S. service members who are separated from their families stay connected. Help ranges from supporting struggling spouses of military men to arranging to get military members home for funerals of family members.

DANIEL CIMA/AMERICAN RED CROSS



Education

The Red Cross trains more than 15 million people annually in the skills necessary to effectively respond to emergencies. It presently has more than half a million volunteers and 35,000 employees who work through nearly 600 locally supported chapters.

DANIEL CIMA/AMERICAN RED CROSS



Disaster relief

The American Red Cross responds to tens of thousands of disasters in the U.S. and also works with 186 other International Red Cross and Red Crescent societies to offer neutral humanitarian care to victims of devastating natural disasters around the world.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

CC: You also share money and other resources with other organizations, don't you?

GM: Yes. We raised \$485 million for Haiti. In addition to supplying tarps, tents, water, latrines and food, we also partnered with groups who could build more permanent shelters, like Habitat for Humanity. We worked with a number of local construction companies so we could employ Haitians on the ground to do rubble removal and home repair. And we put them through a really rigorous proposal process, because we want to make sure we can account for every dime that they spend.

CC: When you took the helm of the American Red Cross in 2008, it was in financial trouble. How's it doing now?

GM: We closed fiscal year 2008 with a \$209 million operating deficit. In fiscal year 2010, we closed with a modest surplus. This year has been tough. First, there's a lot of donor fatigue from Haiti. When donors gave to Haiti, it was a wonderful thing because it was terribly needed over there, but it doesn't help us do anything to respond to the many other disasters we help with each year, which is part of our mission. My hope is that we'll come pretty close to breaking even, but it's not as strong a year as last year. It will be nowhere near the kind of deficit we were looking at before, and I'm still optimistic.

CC: Have you tried new strategies to raise funds for the American Red Cross?

GM: We have a pretty extensive celebrity cabinet. These celebrities use social media very heavily. So when a disaster strikes, they start tweeting. In fact, before we even got the call from the federation that the Japanese Red Cross was collecting donations

to help respond to the recent earthquakes, they had started a viral call to action urging people to text \$10 to 90999. This electronic approach really took off. In Haiti, for another example, we collected \$32 million from text messages. That was at \$10 a pop, and most of it came from youth.

We're also trying to make it easier for donors to donate in ways so that they can budget their giving. We have a new annual disaster giving program to which Costco, for example, generously committed to donate. This enables us to do prevention in addition to response. I've talked to a number of large donors, and they tell me this arrangement is good for them because then

they can budget. They don't know when disaster is going to strike either.

When we look at our brand and break it down into how people feel about the American Red Cross, we score the highest among youth. There are Red Cross clubs at colleges and high schools. Many kids donate blood on a regular basis. The brand has become cool.

So we convened a big group of young social media experts and had a huge social media convention that was in our hall of service [in Washington, D.C.] where, in World War I, nurses were rolling bandages, and here all these people were tweeting during the conference and presenting all this new technology.

I thought, "Wow, this is pretty good for a 130-year-old institution." We're getting there. [H]



Money matters

THE BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU'S standards for accountability dictate that a charity should spend at least 65 percent of its total expenses on program activities. The American Red Cross vastly outperforms on this measure, spending an organization-wide average of 91 percent of every dollar

raised on humanitarian services. The other 9 cents supports the general operations of the Red Cross such as human resources, information technology, communications, fundraising and corporate finance.

The organization's administrative costs are not tied to individual disasters and keep the American Red Cross running and ready to respond to the nearly 70,000 disasters that it responds to annually, in addition to collecting lifesaving blood, teaching skills that can save a life, and assisting military members and their families.—WF

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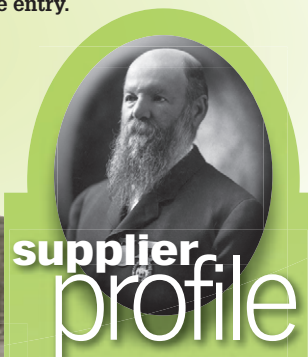
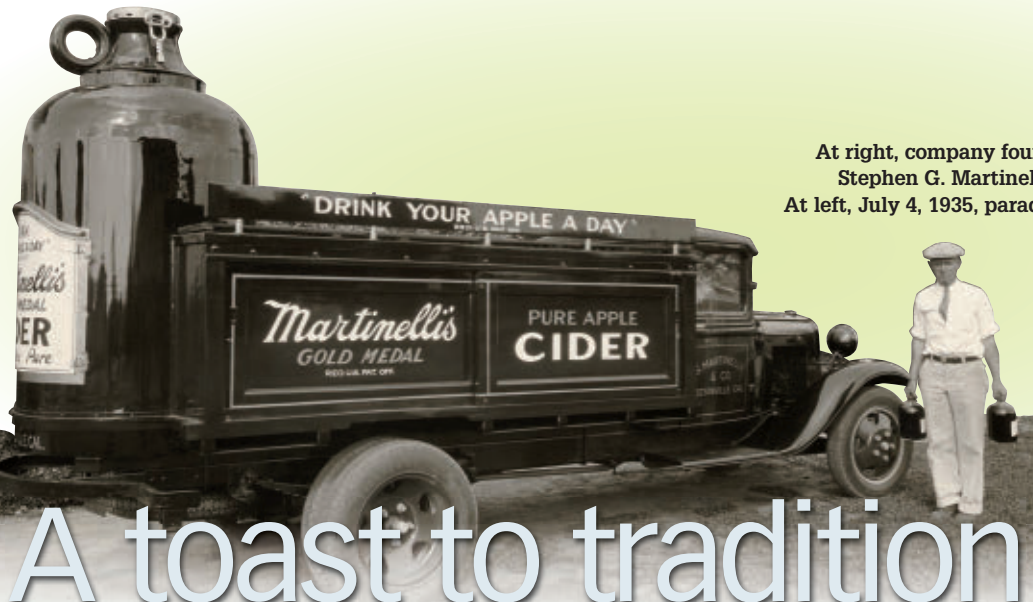
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At right, company founder
Stephen G. Martinelli.
At left, July 4, 1935, parade entry.



supplier
profile

A toast to tradition

Martinelli's celebrates 143 years of sweet-tasting success

By Claire Sykes

FROM THANKSGIVING to New Year's, glasses brim with S. Martinelli & Company's sparkling apple cider. Sweet yet tart, its fresh-picked flavor is reason enough to celebrate. You can also raise a toast to the 143-year-old company's time-honored juice-making tradition.

For five generations, the Martinelli family has been picking and pressing apples to make their famous effervescent refreshment. "We haven't at all changed the way we make apple juice," John Martinelli, president and the founder's great-grandson, tells *The Connection*.

It begins with U.S.-grown apples: Gala and Fuji, Red and Golden Delicious, Pink Lady, Honey Crisp and Granny Smith. But it's the ugly, squatty Newtown Pippin that's the company's signature variety.

"It has the best flavor for any apple juice on earth," says Martinelli. "We buy them all; we've got that market locked up."

The apples hang on the tree until they're completely ripe, then are picked and hauled to the company's processing plant. There, staff wash and hand-sort the harvest, tossing out apples that don't meet company standards. Huge machines grind and press the pulp, setting the juices free. The golden nectar is filtered at orchard temperature, not boiled and vacuumed to a concentrate like other apple juices. The only heat Martinelli's apples feel is the sun's, until the flash-pasteurization process. The steamy juice fills the bottles, which are immediately capped so the apple essence can't escape, and then cooled.

"This process gives you the highest-quality product," says Martinelli, who taste-tests each day's batches. "It may cost more, but it's worth it."

It always has been. In 1859, a 15-year-old Swiss immigrant named Stephen G. Martinelli (the name Stephen Martinelli is another family tradition) joined his brother Louis on his farm in central California's fertile, apple-growing Pajaro Valley.

Several years later, in Watsonville, still the home of the company, he was making soda water in a lean-to on the barn, and soon added ginger ale and a patented orange champagne.

In 1868, when he established S. Martinelli & Company, Stephen introduced his bottle-fermented champagne cider, with apples from his brother's acreage. Seventeen years later, he moved to a new production plant and launched a hard cider, followed by soda (five flavors) and apple cider. His son joined the business in 1918 and helped develop the pasteurization process to assure a shelf-stable product.

Then Prohibition hit. "That was our first big challenge," says John Martinelli. "Having our top product rendered illegal forced us to create the sparkling cider category that we're so renowned for today."

Over the decades, the company faced a variety of challenges but always managed to survive. For example, when John came on board in 1979, the company was buckling under increasing customer demand. "We couldn't make enough product to keep it on grocery store shelves," he explains. In 1984, bank loans helped rebuild their plant, doubling apple production and tripling sparkling cider volume.

Then China stormed the market, in the late '90s, with concentrated apple juice at half the price of Martinelli's. "It made it very difficult for us to compete in the family-sized category," says Martinelli. But nobody could conquer Martinelli's juices that sparkled or were poured from their iconic apple-shaped 10-ounce bottle—and Costco couldn't resist them.

From generation to generation, S. Martinelli & Company is maintaining the tradition "of quality that people can count on," Martinelli says. "What's most important to us is continuing our family legacy, and our customers being a part of that with us." ☐

Claire Sykes (www.sykeswrites.com) is a freelance writer in Portland, Oregon.



John Martinelli

PHOTOS COURTESY: S. MARTINELLI & COMPANY

Company name:
S. Martinelli & Company
Year founded: 1868
Founder:
Stephen G. Martinelli
President: John Martinelli
Employees: 250
Address: P.O. Box 1868
Watsonville, CA 95077-1868
Website:
www.martinellis.com

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—John Martinelli





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Friends at the table

Supper clubs serve up food, friendship

By Debi Shawcross

WHETHER YOU'RE LOOKING for a way to foster relationships or develop new friendships, starting your own supper club could give your social life a delicious boost.

In today's world, where we eat many meals on the run, an intimate dinner with friends is a great luxury. Even though we communicate endlessly with one another by text, Facebook, Twitter and so on, it's all done in a fairly disconnected way. The need to connect in person is more important than ever. Why not combine your love of food and cooking with an evening at home with friends?

That sounds like a dinner party, right? A supper club is a dinner party of sorts, only it's not just about the food. A supper club is designed to strengthen relationships on a deep, ongoing level. Club members commit to meet regularly with common goals in mind.

With these very interests in mind, my husband and I started a supper club several years ago with some of our close friends. Important to all of us was the desire to stay connected as we juggled careers, kids and day-to-day adventures. Our supper club has stayed strong, allowing us to maintain a deeper connection with each other and in a way that is more affordable than an expensive night out with dinner and drinks.

Here are some tips to help you form your own supper club—and enjoy the great food and friendships that can come from it.

Decide who will be members.

Are you a group of young married couples eager to entertain? A group of friends looking to strengthen friendships? Are you new to the area and interested in making friends? Are you a group of single professional people interested in networking and expanding relationships?

The Costco Connection

You can find all essential ingredients for your own supper club, from fine roasts to world-class wines, at your local Costco. You can also find select fine foods on Costco.com.

Supper clubs are a great way of helping friends stay in touch over a delicious meal.

RON MANVILLE

Organize your club with eight to 10 people you regularly want to meet and eat with, including neighbors, couples, single professionals, longtime friends or people you just want to get to know better. You can even have a regular group but leave a couple of seats open to invite special, rotating guests. Regardless, make sure everyone has the same goals. (It's a club, after all, and every club needs a few ground rules.)

Get organized. Decide how often you would like to meet. Every month? Every other month? Maybe quarterly works best for everyone's schedules. For your supper club to



Costco member Debi Shawcross is author of *Friends at the Table: The Ultimate Supper Club Cookbook*, and shops at the Costco in Richmond, Virginia. Find her at www.debishawcross.com.

operate smoothly, everyone will need to commit to a schedule and stick with it.

Are there any types of food to avoid? Early in the process, discuss things like food allergies, aversions and preferences. Are there any vegetarians in the group? It's much better to have an upfront understanding of the types of foods people are most interested in eating or experimenting with.

Share in the cooking. Figure out how to handle menu preparation. For example, one member or couple can bring an appetizer, another can bring the salad, the host can prepare the entrée and another member or couple can bring dessert.

In my supper club, the host decides the menu for the night and everybody works off that plan, ensuring the flavors in each course will flow seamlessly into the next, enhancing the overall dining experience.

Set a budget. Money may or may not be an issue for your group. Simply rotating the host's role and course assignment may be the best way to handle the cost of ingredients. (Everyone pays for the course he or she is preparing.) Alternatively, you may wish to keep a log of all expenses for each gathering and divide the cost equally. Decide what will work best for all of you.

Keep it interesting. Once you have your supper club up and running, keep it fresh by introducing new ideas. For example, you can vary the dress code or formality of the menu, have an ethnic night (including themed music), host a masquerade party or even meet to eat outside at a park.

On one of my favorite supper club evenings, we attended a concert together and ate our meal tailgate style before heading into the show. We captured the gathering in photos, adding them to our journal of supper club triumphs and mishaps.

Not all dishes will be four stars, but that's OK. The goal of a supper club is to work and eat together, building relationships based on common experiences. Consider it a regular social event that gives you a reason to explore various cooking styles. If you have a group of friends who love to experiment with different foods, the possibilities are endless.

Here are some recipe ideas for your holiday supper club using ingredients from Costco. The three recipes on the next page are from Costco's latest cookbook, *A Decade of Cooking The Costco Way*, which you can see at Costco.com (search "cookbooks").

IRIDIO PHOTOGRAPHY

Holiday Beef Tenderloin

1 tablespoon Kirkland Signature™ Pure Sea Salt

1 teaspoon each Kirkland Signature Granulated California Garlic (or garlic powder), onion powder and smoked paprika

½ teaspoon lemon-pepper seasoning or Kirkland Signature Coarse Ground Malabar Pepper

1 (4 to 6 pound) USDA Choice Extreme Trim Beef Tenderloin

Heat oven to 425 F.

In a small bowl, blend together the sea salt, garlic, onion powder, smoked paprika and lemon-pepper seasoning. Line a baking sheet with spray-coated aluminum foil. Place tenderloin onto center of sheet. (Tuck thin end under, if desired, to prevent overcooking of small end.)

Sprinkle or rub the dried seasoning blend all over the roast. Roast 45 to 60 minutes, until meat thermometer inserted in center of the meat reads 140 F for rare or 155 F for medium.

Remove from the oven and bring the foil up around roast to tent and keep warm before carving. Let stand 5 to 10 minutes, then carve.

Serve with green beans and roasted onions, if desired. Makes 8 to 12 servings.

Recipe courtesy of Amy Muzyka-McGuire.

More
recipes



Smoky Apple and Butternut Squash Soup

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 tablespoon butter | 1 cup apple juice
(more if necessary) |
| 1 tablespoon olive oil | 1 cup chicken broth |
| 3 large onions, finely chopped
(about 4½ cups) | ½ teaspoon salt |
| 1 teaspoon chipotle chile powder | ½ teaspoon ground black pepper |
| 2 pounds butternut squash,
peeled and cut into chunks
(about 6 cups) | Toasted pecans, sour cream and
thin apple slices, for garnish
(optional) |
| 1 pound sweet Eastern* apples,
peeled and cut into chunks
(about 3½ cups) | |

Heat butter and oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add onions and chipotle powder; cook, stirring, until the onions are tender, about 10 minutes.

Add squash, apples, apple juice, chicken broth, salt and pepper; bring to a boil. Cover and cook over low heat until the apples and squash are very soft, about 30 minutes. Cool.

Purée with an immersion blender or a food processor. Return to the saucepan and bring to a simmer, adding more apple juice or broth if needed.

Garnish with toasted pecans, sour cream swirls and apple slices, if desired. Makes 7 servings.

**Brands may vary by region; substitute a similar product.*

Recipe from *A Decade of Cooking The Costco Way*.



IRIDIO PHOTOGRAPHY



IRIDIO PHOTOGRAPHY

Crispy Chocolate Ice Cream Mud Pie

- | | |
|---|--|
| ½ cup Hershey's Syrup,
plus more for serving | 2 cups crisp rice cereal |
| 1½ cup Hershey's Special Dark
Chocolate Chips or Hershey's
Semi-Sweet Chocolate Chips | 4 cups (1 quart) vanilla
ice cream, divided |
| | 4 cups (1 quart) chocolate
ice cream, divided |

Butter a 9-inch pie plate.

Place ½ cup chocolate syrup and chocolate chips in a medium microwave-safe bowl. Microwave at medium (50%) for 45 seconds, or until hot; stir until smooth. Reserve ¼ cup of the chocolate syrup mixture; set aside. Add cereal to the remaining chocolate syrup mixture, stirring until well coated; let cool slightly.

Place the cereal mixture in the prepared pie plate. Press it evenly, using the back of a spoon, onto the bottom and sides to form a crust. Place in the freezer for 15 to 20 minutes, or until firm.

Spread half of the vanilla ice cream in the crust. Spoon the reserved ¼ cup chocolate syrup mixture over the layer. Spread half of the chocolate ice cream over the sauce.

Top with alternating scoops of vanilla and chocolate ice cream. Cover and return to the freezer until serving time. Drizzle with additional syrup just before serving. Makes 8 servings.

Recipe from *A Decade of Cooking The Costco Way*.

Cranberry-Pecan Spinach Salad

- 1 pound Boskovich Farms* Fresh 'n' Quick spinach, rinsed and torn into bite-size pieces
- 1 cup pecan pieces
- ¾ cup blue cheese crumbles (optional)
- 1 cup dried sweetened cranberries

DRESSING

- ¼ cup white wine vinegar
- ¼ cup cider vinegar
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- ½ cup white sugar
- 2 tablespoons toasted sesame seeds
- 1 tablespoon poppy seeds
- 2 teaspoons minced onion
- ¼ teaspoon paprika

In a large bowl, combine spinach, pecans, blue cheese and cranberries. Set aside.

To prepare the dressing, combine all ingredients in a medium bowl and whisk together.

Just before serving, pour the dressing over the spinach mixture and toss well.

Makes 6 to 8 servings.

Tip: Toasted slivered almonds can be substituted for the pecans.

**Brands may vary by region; substitute a similar product.*

Recipe from *A Decade of Cooking The Costco Way*.



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ARCHIVE PHOTOS COURTESY OF CONSUMER REPORTS

On the watch

Consumer Reports sets the standard

By Stephanie E. Ponder

FOR THE PAST 75 years, readers have turned to *Consumer Reports* to help them make informed buying decisions. The magazine, published by the nonprofit Consumers Union, tests and rates thousands of products a year—from socks to pasta sauce and kitchen appliances to health-care plans.

The magazine's milestones include the use of its coverage of cigarettes in the 1964 landmark report issued by the Surgeon General's Advisory Committee on Smoking and Health, consumer advocate Ralph Nader's eight-year tenure on the board of the Consumers Union and changes made to products that received "Not Acceptable" designations from the magazine. (For example, in 2010 the Lexus GX 460 earned a "Don't Buy: Safety Risk" rating because of an emergency handling problem. Lexus recalled the model, fixed the problem and *Consumer Reports* lifted the designation.)

Today, the magazine is complemented by an online component (www.consumerreports.org) and a sister publication, *ShopSmart*. A staff of 600—testers, editors, technical staff and representatives in places such as Washington, D.C., and San Francisco—gets information from the testing facility to readers.

Consumer Reports' editor in chief, Kim Kleman, spoke with *The Connection* from CR's headquarters in New York.

Costco Connection: At its core, what is *Consumer Reports* all about?

Kim Kleman: We're more than just a magazine that provides information about products people buy. Our subscribers feel they're part of an organization. [They] have to believe in our mission. The ratings are the core of what we

do. We strive to get the best information to our subscribers so they'll get the most for their money, especially in these times.

We're always looking at brands that are market leaders, and we're testing continuously to capture a snapshot in the magazine. On the website, information goes up as the tests are done. We want to be helpful to consumers exactly as they need us.

We also have a survey research department. We do national surveys and survey our [4 million] readers to get their feedback.

CC: How does the magazine remain objective?

KK: We don't take advertising. The money we use to run the tests and our operations comes from our subscribers. In an organization like ours, we don't want there to be a speck of doubt.

We have absolutely no reason to steer [subscribers] to one item versus another. We do testing that's repeatable and give every model a fair shot.

[Additionally] there's never any use of our logo on anything. It raises questions about a pay-to-play sort of thinking. The consumer is our only constituent. We don't want a company to get rich using our name or by saying that it's a *Consumer Reports* best buy.

CC: How do you test for everyday usage?

KK: When we are investigating a product we might see what the national standards are. We adhere to federal standards and go above and beyond them.

[From there] we often have to create our own test to best reproduce [how] a real consumer might use something.

Extensive product testing has been a hallmark of *Consumer Reports* over its 75-year history.

We have 50 testing labs that offer a definite expertise in a variety of products and tests. We sometimes go to outside labs for specific tests that we supervise.

CC: Have your findings ever been challenged?


KK: In our 75 years of testing, we've been sued 16 times. We sometimes get things wrong; we try to get it right. Our tests are designed to be repeatable.

After our tests, anyone who wants to see our data for their item can come in and see our results. We try to be as transparent as we can possibly be.

CC: Can you talk a little about *ShopSmart*?

KK: For *Consumer Reports*, our typical reader really relishes research. He wants to know how the top product compares to the 30th.

For *ShopSmart* we asked, "What about people who just want to know that there's somebody who's tested them all and what's top rated?"

Our challenge is figuring [out] how people want to access the content [and] to make it relevant. We need to make sure we're testing the stuff our subscribers need us to test. 

The Costco Connection

Consumer Reports and *ShopSmart* are available in most Costco warehouses. The January 2012 issue of *Consumer Reports* will be bagged with the 2012 *Buying Guide*.



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Triumph in Central Park



Andrea Bocelli (right) and a host of singing talent (above) wowed the crowds in Central Park.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF © GIOVANNI DE SANDRE

Bocelli's *One Night* dazzles

By Bryan Reesman

WHILE IT WAS rainy and unseasonably cold on the September evening that Andrea Bocelli chose to perform his first Central Park concert in more than a decade, approximately 60,000 faithful fans braved the elements, flocking to the Great Lawn to hear the acclaimed singer—backed by the New York Philharmonic, the Westminster Symphonic Choir and special guests—deliver a two-hour-plus concert of arias, standards and pop favorites.

The tenor acknowledged the audience's resilience, and his fellow performers radiated enough energy to warm the masses. While the stars in the sky may have been obscured by clouds, the starlight display within the band shell offered a romantic nighttime backdrop as compensation. And *The Connection* was there, soaking it all in, so to speak.

Bocelli seemed comfortable amid the spectacular setting. He has performed for foreign dignitaries, in opera houses and in large public places such as the Piazza del Duomo in Milan, and he views them all in the same way. "It doesn't matter the size of the place where you perform," the tenor explained to *The Connection*. "What matters is the feedback of the audience, the possibility to create an intimate feeling with the people who decided to spend money and time to listen to you. On certain occasions, special ones, like Central Park, the place itself represents this feeling, and places like this one are symbols."

Captured on his new live DVD, *Concerto: One Night in Central Park*, the epic event featured music that spanned numerous genres, as well as a plethora of guest stars. The first half focused on operatic material by the likes of Verdi, Puccini and Bizet, with support from bass-baritone Bryn Terfel, soprano Ana Maria Martinez and soprano Pretty Yende.

The second half had more of a standards and pop slant and even more special guests, including trumpeter Chris Botti and violinist Nicola Benedetti. A glittery Celine Dion emerged onstage for a duet of their Grammy-winning hit, "The Prayer," which was dedicated to the late Liz Taylor and which brought people to their feet. Tony Bennett's appearance for "New York, New York" maintained their ecstatic enthusiasm.

The concert was stuffed with plenty of crowd pleasers to keep the dampened audience engaged. At one point Grammy-winning pianist David Foster, Bocelli's accompanist during much of the latter half of the concert, exclaimed to the tenor, "You are singing your ass off." Bocelli closed out the evening with "Amazing Grace," "Time to Say Goodbye" (a smash hit for him solo and with Sarah Brightman) and "Nessun Dorma," drawing hearty applause from his congregation.

Large productions like this never go on without a hitch. Brief technical problems led to Bocelli's microphone dying out, perhaps appropriately, during the delicate end of one tune in the second half of the show. He then proclaimed that he hates dealing with mikes and prefers to sing without amplification.

Bocelli may be considered a modern classical crossover artist, but the tenor obviously embraces the old-school approach to live performance: good old-fashioned projection. That sentiment echoes the singer's approach to his craft. "It is not what you sing," declares Bocelli. "It is how you sing that matters."

That philosophy has brought him much success. [E]

Bryan Reesman has been published in *The New York Times*, *American Way* and *Inked*.

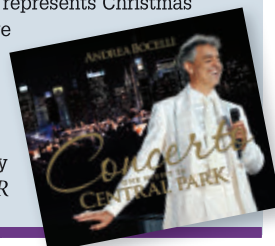
Christmas cheer

FOR ANDREA BOCELLI, Christmas is the best holiday of the year because of its universal appeal and promotion of family unity. "Mine has always been a Christian family," the tenor told *The Connection* in discussing his childhood holiday traditions.

"At Christmastime we would all go to Mass and then we would have a dinner of boiled capon and capon broth. In the house there would be that unmistakable smell from the Christmas tree, and there would be the Nativity scene all set up and illuminated by my father. Then there were the typical Christmas carols and that gentle, happy atmosphere that only Christmas can bring to the heart of a family. Today I try to keep the same tradition."

Musically speaking, Bocelli stated that Christmas comes for him with the opening notes of "Tu Scendi Dalle Stelle" ("You Come Down from the Stars"), which is probably the first Christmas song he ever learned and the one he looked forward to singing in church the most.

"There are so many other songs which could be considered superior for their music and literary content," he said, "but [this] is the song which represents Christmas for me, and more than any other can take me back in time to the wonderful days of my early childhood." —BR



The Costco Connection

Andrea Bocelli's *Concerto: One Night in Central Park* CD/DVD is available in most Costco locations.



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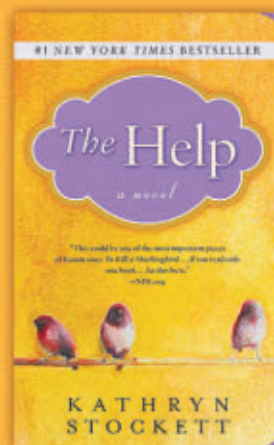
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Circle game

The Night Circus is a magical read

By T. Foster Jones

IN EARLY 2011, Erin Morgenstern was in Salem, Massachusetts, when a psychic approached her. (In Salem, this is not as unusual as it sounds.) Upon learning that Morgenstern was a writer, Morgenstern says, the psychic told her, "You're going to be big. Anne Rice big."

Although Morgenstern (<http://erinmorgenstern.com>) is no stranger to psychics and tarot readings and such, she still had her doubts. The novel (her first) that she had been working on for several years, called *The Night Circus*, had been shuttled back and forth between agents and Morgenstern for revision after revision, with no end in sight.

Fast-forward a few months to summer, when her agent called her one more time. "It was a Friday. I expected he was going to send it back for more revisions," Morgenstern tells *The Connection*. "Instead he told me it was being reviewed by the first of several editors. The following Friday, I had an offer."

The subsequent months were a series of cascading events for the 33-year-old graphic designer.

The book, about a mysterious circus and two young magicians caught up in a competition they don't fully understand, who complicate matters by falling in love, was published in September. This magically intense novel is, as of press time, in third place on the *New York Times* best-seller list. Morgenstern, who received a six-figure advance for the book, has flown all around the country for book tours and signings and interviews. And bidding rights for the film option have reached a frenzied level. (Apparently, the psychic called that too.)

Morgenstern says she feels a little like Alice,

having fallen down a rabbit hole.

"It's very disorienting, very strange," says Morgenstern, who recently relocated from Salem to Boston. "I'm trying my best to just live in the moment, enjoy it and not think about it too much."

Her ride is all the more remarkable for someone who didn't plan on being a writer. Although a voracious reader while growing up ("I had a perfect little nook in my closet with pillows and blankets—I liked to get lost and live in the book for a while"), Morgenstern was drawn more to the visual and performing arts.



KELLY DAVIDSON

Erin Morgenstern

A theater major in college, Morgenstern found herself floundering in her 20s, wondering what to do with her life: "I wandered around through various theater and art things, trying to find a role to fit me, and always came back to storytelling in one way or another."

In 2005, she discovered motivation during National Novel Writing Month, an annual writing competition that requires participants to create a 50,000-word novel in the month of November.

"It was a really good exercise," she explains. "You have to write so fast that you stop being so self-critical."

She started writing about the circus, exploring it as an imaginary space. However, she says, even when finished, the book had no plot. "I was lucky enough to have that plotless manuscript end up with a few agents who were interested in it if I overhauled the entire thing, which I did," she says.

Morgenstern spent the following three years or so overhauling, staying mostly at home, powered by copious amounts of tea and accompanied by her two cats, Bucket and Tessa.

"I'm a messy writer," she explains. "I need to write and write and write, out of order, bits and pieces—lots of material that I can then distill," a nonlinear style that is very much reflected in the novel.

"There's this idea that writing is very neat," continues Morgenstern, who is currently at work on a new novel. "That you just start at the beginning and finish at the end. That's not how it works."

And, despite the predictions of that Salem psychic, Morgenstern still has trouble grasping how far she's come and what's coming next. "I never imagined," she says. "We surpassed wildest-dreams territory a while ago. I just wanted to have a book that you could pick up and read. The fact that people are embracing it in such an enthusiastic way—it's humbling and flattering, but still a little bit overwhelming." ☐



THOSE OF YOU who pay close attention to Costco book picks may remember that Erin Morgenstern's *The Night Circus* was a staff pick when this book came out in September.

Jonna Erickson, the assistant buyer who made it her pick, became the novel's most vocal cheerleader. Now that I've read it, I, too, have fallen under its spell.

The story unfolds in the setting of a black-and-white circus that appears only at night, a circus that is filled with tent after tent of magical and seemingly impossible performances.

Underlying this tale is a competition between two young magicians, Celia and Marco, who have been pitted against each other as part of a wager. When they fall in love, neither realizes what the ultimate cost of that wager will be.

I can't help but believe that soon this book will have a whole cheerleading squad made up largely of Costco members.

For more book picks, see page 43.



FRANCE FREEMAN

Pennie Clark Ianniciello,
Costco book buyer

Signed book giveaway

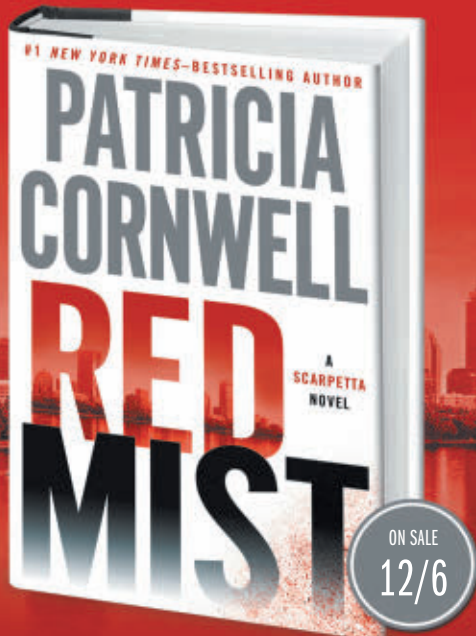
COSTCO HAS 50 SIGNED COPIES of Erin Morgenstern's *The Night Circus* to give away. To enter, go to Costco.com, search for "Dec Book Pick" and follow the instructions. Or print your name, address and daytime phone number on a postcard or letter and send it to: Erin Morgenstern, *The Costco Connection*, P.O. Box 34088, Seattle, WA 98124-1088.

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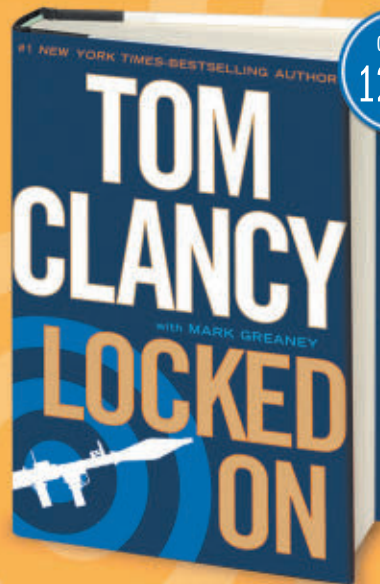


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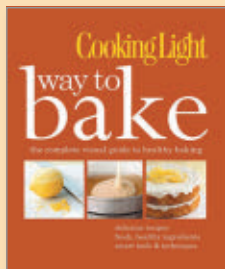


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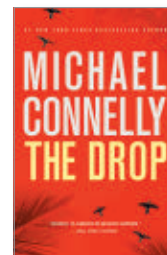
For the first time, Cooking Light brings together in one book all the essential techniques for creating delicious, healthy baked goods for both everyday enjoyment and not-so-everyday celebrations.

Raspberry Linzer Cookies

- 7.5 ounces all-purpose flour (about 1½ cups plus 2 tablespoons), divided
 - 1 cup blanched whole almonds
 - ½ teaspoon baking powder
 - ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 - ¼ teaspoon salt
 - ⅔ cup granulated sugar
 - ½ cup unsalted butter, softened
 - ½ teaspoon grated lemon rind
 - 4 large egg yolks
 - 6 tablespoons raspberry preserves with seeds
 - 2 teaspoons powdered sugar
1. Weigh or lightly spoon 2.25 ounces flour (about ½ cup) into a dry measuring cup; level with a knife. Place 2.25 ounces flour and almonds in a food processor; process until finely ground. Weigh or lightly spoon remaining 5.25 ounces flour (about 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons) into a dry measuring cup. Combine almond mixture, remaining 5.25 ounces flour, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt, stirring well with a whisk.
 2. Place granulated sugar, butter, and rind in a large bowl; beat with a mixer at medium speed until light and fluffy (about 3 minutes). Add egg yolks; beat until well blended. Beating at low speed, gradually add flour mixture; beat just until a soft dough forms. Turn dough out onto a sheet of plastic wrap; knead lightly 3 times or until smooth. Divide dough into 2 equal portions; wrap each portion in plastic wrap. Chill 1 hour.
 3. Preheat oven to 350°.
 4. Roll each dough portion to a ½-inch thickness on a floured surface; cut with a 2-inch rectangular cookie cutter with fluted edges into 36 cookies. Repeat procedure with remaining dough portion; use a 1-inch rectangular fluted cutter to remove centers of 36 rectangles. Arrange 1 inch apart on baking sheets lined with parchment paper. Bake, 1 batch at a time, at 350° for 10 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Cool on pans 5 minutes. Remove from pans; cool on wire racks.
 5. Spread center of each whole cookie with about ½ teaspoon preserves. Sprinkle cutout cookies with powdered sugar. Place 1 cutout cookie on top of each whole cookie. Yield: 36 cookies (serving size: 1 cookie).
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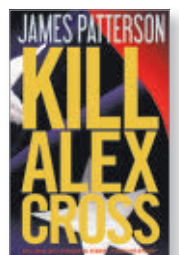
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Books & Blu-ray/DVDs

Characters played by Emma Stone (far left), Octavia Spencer (center) and Viola Davis form a friendship around a secret writing project.



Author Kathryn Stockett (left) and writer/producer/director Tate Taylor (above).

Integrating The miracle of *The Help* Voices

By J. Rentilly

IT'S GOOD TO be reminded that impossible things happen sometimes. For instance, a first novel selling 6 million copies and then being turned into a blockbuster motion picture by the author's best friend. The heartfelt mantra of both the novel and the film version of *The Help* is that miracles happen and that every single voice matters. *The Costco Connection* recently caught up with three of *The Help*'s powerful voices—author Kathryn Stockett, writer/producer/director Tate Taylor and star Emma Stone—for the whole story.

Kathryn Stockett

The Costco Connection: You began writing *The Help* as a way of self-soothing after 9/11.

Kathryn Stockett: I was in an apartment in downtown New York. I was very pregnant. I sat down on September 10 with a story in mind, but nothing was really coming out of me, and then September 11 happened. The morning of September 12, I sat down and started writing *The Help*. I didn't mean to. But I was so homesick and I was missing Demetrie, the woman who had raised me, and the only way I could talk to her was to write this story. I was just trying to have another conversation with someone I really missed at a really hard time in history.

CC: Ten years later, you're a best-selling novelist with a film shepherded to the screen by your best friend, Tate Taylor.

KS: It didn't happen fast. (Laughs) I wasn't in a hurry. I took my time. I did the work.

CC: The book was rejected 50 times before it was finally published, and now the book has sold 6 million copies and there is

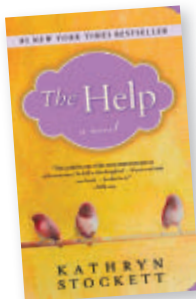
Oscar talk about the film. How does a book go from nothing and nowhere to being an international sensation?

KS: You need to have a friend with a really big mouth. I happen to be blessed with about 500 of those. When these women get on the bandwagon, they just can't stop talking about *The Help*. They were waiting in airport bookstores putting copies of the book into the hands of strangers. Eventually, those strangers gave in and read the book and then started telling other people about it, I guess.

CC: Why do you think the book has connected so deeply with readers?

KS: I don't really know why people love *The Help* the way they do. Not everything in that book is good. There's a lot of shame in the book. There's a lot of sadness in the book.

Book giveaway



your name, address and daytime phone number on a postcard or letter and send it to: *The Help*, *The Costco Connection*, P.O. Box 34088, Seattle, WA 98124-1088.

COSTCO HAS 50 deluxe, signed copies of Kathryn Stockett's *The Help* to give away. Each winner will also get a bookmark and four movie-themed recipe cards. To enter, go to Costco.com, search for "The Help giveaway" and follow the instructions. Or print

CC: You've said that you feel conflicted, doing well with *The Help*, which is a novel that shares the suffering of others.

KS: I guess the guilt is just part of being a Southern woman. Maybe every writer feels like this, profiting from someone else's pain. It's embarrassing. It's shameful. It's hard. The suffering of these women, it's hard to accept that as a storyteller. I guess the choice is to not write about it, to fight your instincts, resist who you are and what you're supposed to do. Or you just write the book and live with it. That's what I'm trying to do.

Tate Taylor

CC: A few years back, you were an unknown filmmaker and comic actor with big plans to make your friend's unpublishable novel into an independent film.

Tate Taylor: Kathryn's my childhood friend, and I loved the story she told. I knew the story she told. I wanted to tell it too, as a movie. We didn't really know how it would all work out, even once it did get published. We

CONTINUED ON PAGE 43

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 41

didn't know we really had something going until we were driving around Mississippi together, Kathryn and me, and her publisher called and said, "Your book's debuting [in] the top 25 on [the] *New York Times* best-seller list." We did what any Southerners would do: We pulled off to the nearest truck stop and bought a six-pack. We sat in the car ... and I think it finally dawned on us, we might have more than an indie movie on our hands here.

CC: How did you approach adapting the novel for the big screen?

TT: I had nobody, no money, no input, no deadlines, no pressure when I started adapting Kathryn's book. It was just me and my instincts working at a leisurely pace. I wrote that first screenplay long; it was over 200 pages long, and it was pretty much every

I'm an overnight success that took 17 years, and I did it without a single robot in my movie.

CC: *The Help* seems like a uniquely American story, but it works internationally.

TT: What it comes down to is relationships and courage and integrity and speaking up. Those are universal themes. That stuff transcends being purely American. We're going to Arab countries, where the book has been really embraced. People are speaking up, or dream about it, everywhere around the world. What's great about *The Help* is, it's not leaders or people in power doing the speaking; it's regular women standing up for what's right. I think that's inspiring to people, no matter where they live.

Emma Stone

CC: How did you come to the project?

Emma Stone: I am lucky enough to have an agent who keeps her eyes wide open. They wanted me to go have a meeting with this writer/director [Tate Taylor] I'd never heard of, and honestly, I don't think the writer/director had ever heard of me either. But my mom called me, and I was telling her about this meeting I had coming up, and she just flipped out because she loved the book so much—which I had never heard of either, because I guess I'm totally out of touch and live in a bubble. So I went to the meeting with a little extra enthusiasm, and we just had a really great meeting. I knew I had to do it, if they'd only let me.

CC: *The Help* is a different role for you.

ES: Definitely, but I was surrounded by people on this movie who love—love—life and love to laugh. Very easily a story like *The Help* can veer into super-seriousness or sadness or heaviness. I mean, I've had some really [terrible] days in my life, but there's never been a single one where I haven't also laughed. Tate is a director who recognizes that.

CC: One of the powerful messages of *The Help* is how storytelling can be liberating.

ES: Yeah, totally! Stories are healing. The reason we all fall in love with art, the reason it exists, is because everyone has a story and a purpose and something to share. Everyone should share their stories in some way—write a story, paint a picture, sing a song. Whatever's closest to your heart, do that. *The Help* is good proof that stories matter. ☺

J. Rentilly is a Los Angeles-based writer.



Minnie (left) and Aibileen speak in secrecy with Skeeter about their experiences working for white families.

©DREAMWORKS II DISTRIBUTION CO., LLC

scene in the novel. I did it for the love of the material. I knew I needed to drop 80 or 90 pages, so I started looking at it scene by scene and asking, "What makes this scene so special?" Sometimes it was only a look or a glance, sometimes a joke, sometimes a location. So I started cherry-picking those jewels and relocating those tiny treasures into scenes that had to be there to move the story along. I think it worked out pretty well.

CC: Were you the first choice to direct?

TT: People loved Kathryn's book and they loved my script, so I had a studio, DreamWorks, and a producer, Chris Columbus, who stood behind me. Still, this kind of movie doesn't look good on paper—it's a period piece about race relations with an all-female cast and a nobody who's writing and directing it. This is a losing proposition by the numbers. I still believe everyone at the studio took a shot of tequila the day they wired our budget to that Mississippi bank.

The Costco Connection

The Help book, DVD and Blu-ray Disc are available in most Costco locations.



Buyers' picks

December Book buyers' picks

Nonfiction

Michael Bublé Onstage, Offstage, by Michael Bublé, photography by Dean Freeman. An intimate glimpse into Bublé's personal life. Because Bublé allowed Freeman to follow him around, fans are treated to photos of the superstar with his wife, family and friends. Images capture Bublé doing everything from singing into a hairbrush to entertaining thousands at New York City's Madison Square Garden.

—Shana Lind, assistant buyer, books

Kraft Philadelphia Recipe Collection and Crock-Pot Recipe Collection, from Publications International Ltd. I love to cook. These five-ring binder cookbooks are easy to use and have more than 500 recipes each. They lie flat and have tabs to help you navigate the cookbook. Both include photos of the final dishes and cover everything from appetizers to desserts—and all courses in between.

—Josh Lilly, inventory control specialist, books

Fiction

Micro, by Michael Crichton. For decades, Crichton's novels have piqued readers' imaginations and challenged the limits of reality. In *Micro*, Crichton explores the realm of nanotechnology as four graduate students—with only their scientific knowledge and wits to protect them—are cast into the hostile conditions of a rain forest. As always, Crichton blurs the line between sci-fi and reality in a pulse-pounding journey.

—Jeffrey Purtell
inventory control specialist, books

Red Mist, by Patricia Cornwell. In the 19th Kay Scarpetta novel, the forensic expert is in Georgia investigating the death of her murdered deputy chief, Jack Fielding. A visit to the Georgia Prison for Women yields information from a well-informed inmate that will shed light on this and seemingly unrelated murders across the country. If you have never read Cornwell, but are a fan of the TV series *CSI*, this will likely be right up your alley.

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MEDIA BAKERY/SONY PICTURES HOME ENTERTAINMENT

Owen Wilson (left) meets Gertrude Stein (Kathy Bates) and Ernest Hemingway (Corey Stoll) in Woody Allen's *Midnight in Paris*.

Midnight rambler

Kathy Bates muses on acting and Woody Allen

By J. Rentilly

WHETHER SHE IS playing a secretary of defense, a Big Easy matriarch, Santa's wife, a recently reborn defense attorney (NBC's sleeper hit, *Harry's Law*) or the American expat poet and artist Gertrude Stein, in Woody Allen's intoxicating fairy tale *Midnight in Paris*, Oscar-winner Kathy Bates offers presence and passion. Onscreen and in conversation, the 63-year-old actress means what she says. Her conviction is palpable, though never gruff; her intensity always charmed and charming. Quick to laugh, twice as polite as anyone you'll meet, Bates—once one of Broadway's most formidable actresses—is enjoying life.

The Costco Connection: While Hollywood tends to favor disposable ingénues, you have built an extraordinary, much-decorated career. Your work in *Midnight in Paris* is another reminder of how good you really are.

Kathy Bates: Well, I've been very lucky to play the roles I've wanted to, but being a female character actor in Hollywood can be difficult. You always wish there was more to do. And you're always happy when someone like Woody Allen writes you a letter on his personal stationery saying he's got something you need to do in Paris. I've kept that letter close. The only thing to do is say, "Yes, yes, yes"—Gertrude Stein style.

CC: You shot the film in Paris. Ernest Hemingway long ago wrote, "Paris is so very beautiful that it satisfies something in you that is always hungry in America." Does that resonate for you?

KB: If you're asking me to be more eloquent than Hemingway, it's not going to happen. (Laughs) But Paris is a very special place to me. It's good for my soul to go there. I don't know why. I can't explain it. I'm not going to try. When you go to Paris, just be in Paris.

CC: Though we see [Salvador] Dalí and [Luis] Buñuel and Stein, the performances are not caricatures. It's more than funny haircuts and flamboyant costumes.

KB: You always hope it is! (Laughs) Getting ready for this role, I read a lot about Gertrude Stein. I looked at pictures of her, and video. I know I don't look exactly like her, but I heard recordings of her reading her work and put as much of that into the character as I could. I've always read like my life depended on it, so being able to play a great writer like Gertrude Stein was really a dream come true.

CC: In the film, Owen Wilson's character steps into a phantom carriage that takes him each night to jazz-era Paris. Whose carriage would you want to step into?

KB: Oh, I'd probably want to meet [Vincent] van Gogh. I have a copy of his painting *Irises* on my bedroom wall. It's been there for years. It's an inspiration to me. I'd want to sit down and have an absinthe with Vincent.

CC: Many actors have expressed how their work has kept them from a therapist's couch. Does that make sense to you?

KB: The roles I've played have all strung together to create an emotional and a spiritual path that I could not have predicted, so maybe I can agree with that. Quoting an amazing author I worked with in New York, Athol Fugard: "The journey of the artist is a solitary

one." Deep in my heart, I've known this to be true. Every artist must make his own way. To be able to step into some of these wonderful roles, it's like repeating a mantra, and that mantra works on *your* soul as you're attempting to discover the soul of this character you're playing. It changes you.

CC: Maybe your work is so resonant because you connect so deeply with the characters you play.

KB: When you're working on a role, it's a road of compassion. What you're trying to do as an actor is to embody someone else's heart. You have to really find your compassion, find the character's shoes and walk in them so that an audience can do the same thing. That's creating connection and compassion. We all want to understand what's going on in another human being, and acting is one way to do that.

CC: What's something we'd be surprised to know about Woody Allen?

KB: I've worked with him two times in 20 years, and I have to say, he still remains utterly enigmatic to me. My enduring image of him was on the *Midnight* set in this cramped, hot apartment in Paris. He was neatly dressed, khaki pants, long-sleeve summer shirt, those iconic eyeglasses, sitting on an upended apple box with his thumbs together, very contemplatively, waiting for the camera to be set. He appeared to be conserving energy and very focused, but I don't know on what or what he was thinking. I just watched him for a long time. I couldn't tell you what was going on inside of him. Who could? He's brilliant, brilliant, and so very, very funny. Maybe that's enough. [G]

J. Rentilly is a Los Angeles-based writer.

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There is nothing like a Dame

Helen Mirren is in her prime



By Steve Fisher

BRITISH ACTRESS Helen Mirren began her career in the 1960s on stage with the renowned National Youth Theatre and soon joined the Royal Shakespeare Company. She went on to become a television and film star as well, acting in everything from Shakespeare (*The Tempest*) to the action-comedy *Red*. She has garnered multiple major awards and nominations for her performances, including an Emmy as Queen Elizabeth I (*Elizabeth I*) and an Oscar as Queen Elizabeth II (*The Queen*).

But Mirren's real crowning achievement is arguably the role of Detective Chief Inspector Jane Tennison—a driven woman negotiating a decidedly male world—in the British television series *Prime Suspect* (which aired on PBS in the United States). Dame Helen Mirren is not arguing that point.

"[*Prime Suspect*] was a very important transitional moment for me," the Costco member says in a phone interview with *The Connection* from Los Angeles. "It allowed me to transition out of being the not-so-young hottie into the grown-up woman. It gave me a recognition value that I had never had before. I've always worked and was pretty well known. If I had done television, I was recognized in the street for about two weeks afterward. With *Prime Suspect*, I was recognized for the rest of my life."

Here is more of that conversation.

The Costco Connection: What attracted you to the role of Jane Tennison?

Helen Mirren: It was a very proactive role, it was the lead role—which is always nice—it was funny, it was a very nuanced character, the story was great. It was really an attractive proposition.

CC: As Tennison became more in control professionally, her personal life did the opposite. How do you prepare to play that?

HM: In those days, women high up in the police force were fairly rare, which is what the first story was about. So I did talk to police-women about their experiences, especially ones who had done well and were high up in the force—what they've been through and their attitude—and they were incredibly valuable to me. And apart from that I just let my instincts take over.

CC: How would you describe Tennison's character arc over the course of the series?

HM: Up and down. Each writer was given artistic freedom to take her wherever the writer wanted to take her. The final episode was written by a recovering alcoholic, so that was the area he understood and felt he wanted

CC: What were the biggest challenges playing the role?

HM: It was always a pretty intense shoot. I could write a travelogue about all the best morgues in and around London and Manchester. It was physically and mentally quite demanding. It was all location shooting; we didn't shoot in a studio at all.


CC: Did you have any input to the scripts? Do you with any of your projects?

HM: I've done that with movies. But with *Prime Suspect*, because the script was usually quite intensive, it's the structure of the story that's the most important thing in that kind of drama. I was very involved in choosing which writers to use. My feeling was always to allow the writer full artistic freedom. The character was created by a woman, and could only have been created by a woman, but once the character was in place, it just happened that all the good writers who came along after that were male.

CC: You are inspiring many actors today. Who inspired or inspires you?

HM: Anna Magnani was my greatest inspiration. I was attracted by the European actors and actresses.

CC: What films that you weren't in are your favorites?

HM: They tend to be European films. All the films of [Jean] Renoir, Jean Vigo, [Roberto] Rossellini. Those are the films I loved. And I hope Costco begins to carry them because they're very hard to find. 



Detective Chief Inspector Jane Tennison (Helen Mirren) speaks to teen Penny Philips (Laura Greenwood) after her friend is murdered in *Prime Suspect: The Final Act*.

to write about, so that was where he took her. Because there was that artistic freedom for the writers, that's what makes her interesting. Life is pretty random and accidental. We never know how it's going to work out.

The Costco Connection

Prime Suspect: The Complete Collection, a nine-DVD set, is available in all warehouses. Helen Mirren's latest film, *The Debt*, arrives at Costco on Blu-ray on December 6.



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Eric Dowdle has found success creating puzzles inspired by well-known cityscapes.

A perfect fit

Puzzle creator urges families to take another little piece of his art

By Teri Cettina

EVEN SOME OF the most plugged-in families go decidedly low-tech at this time of year. They sweep off the dining room table or set up a card table and pull out a long-standing holiday tradition: a family puzzle.

Jigsaw puzzles have been a fun and economical activity since they were first introduced in the mid-1700s. Puzzles hit their stride during the Great Depression, when advertisers gave them away as free premiums with products such as toothpaste. But their appeal endured for reasons that aren't at all puzzling: They're inexpensive, provide hours of focused activity for kids and adults alike, and can be downright addictive.

Many of the puzzles available at Costco this season feature beautiful and humorous scenes painted by artist Eric Dowdle. By the end of this year, Dowdle Puzzles will have sold 2 million of its trademark cityscapes and quirky folk-art scenes.

But creating puzzles was actually not Dowdle's goal when he launched his career more than 20 years ago. This entrepreneurial artist started out painting custom portraits of historic homes in some of Boston's wealthier neighborhoods.



That venture was so successful that Dowdle continued painting home portraits after he subsequently moved to Utah.

Then Dowdle added a twist: Inspired by his own country upbringing ("My parents were practically Amish in the way they lived," he recalls) and Utah's community-centric feel, he experimented with painting home portraits in a traditional, Americana folk-art style. This whimsical, nostalgic approach was an instant hit, and Dowdle saw the pieces of his business start to come together.

Before long, he got larger commissions painting entire city scenes. He happily spent weeks researching the history of places such as Seattle, Chicago and Puerto Vallarta. Along with the city's visual landmarks (such as Seattle's Space Needle or Chicago's Wrigley Field), Dowdle began adding historic references, cultural tidbits and faces of local celebrities to his paintings.

According to Dowdle Puzzles director of sales Wendy Hemingway, "These fun 'hidden pictures' in his paintings, along with his colorful and detailed style, made Eric's paintings and prints immediately popular. Before long, it occurred to Eric that these paintings would make ideal puzzles—and a new arm of his business was launched." Hemingway worked to place Dowdle's puzzles in a wide range of shops—large retailers, craft and hobby stores, toy stores, souvenir stands, even hospital gift shops.

Becoming a puzzle maker and Costco supplier has challenged Dowdle to think like a major business owner rather than an artist only. For a short while, for instance, he worked with a puzzle fabricator overseas. But during one factory visit, the artist noticed random puzzle pieces scattered on the floor. When he mentioned it, the factory representative reassured him that only 1 percent of the puzzles ended up with missing pieces. Dowdle was flabbergasted. "I don't miss a piece when I'm painting, and no puzzle should ever miss a single piece," he says.

To ensure quality control, he ended up bringing his puzzle production business back to the United States. He also instituted a strict replacement policy: If a customer's puzzle is missing a piece, the customer gets a brand-new puzzle—no questions asked.

Dowdle now lives in a rural home in Lindon, Utah; his 13 peacocks and 200 chickens were audible in the background when *The Connection* interviewed him by phone. In their country-inspired home, Dowdle, his wife and their five kids often gather to do one of his puzzles. Dowdle relishes the idea that his family is not texting, tweeting or posting on each other's Facebook walls during that time: They're just focused on the simple, age-old activity of puzzle-solving.

But what Dowdle enjoys most of all about those moments: "My kids let down their guard and talk to me when we're sitting shoulder to shoulder, working on a puzzle," he says. "They tell me things about school, their friends and what's going on in their lives that they might not otherwise. Who would've thought something as basic as a puzzle could do all that?" [E]

Teri Cettina is a Portland, Oregon, freelancer.

The Costco Connection

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Party wear

BEAUTY, THEY SAY, is in the eye of the beholder. Just ask www.uglychristmasweaterparty.com co-founder Adam Paulson or the occasional person who contacts the website upset that he and his friends would describe certain festive sweaters as ugly.

But if you're going to embrace ugly this holiday season, Paulson, along with friends Brian Miller and Kevin Wool, has some advice for picking out a sweater.

Team Ugly writes, "When choosing an Ugly Christmas sweater, your main goal should be to stimulate as many of the five senses as possible. You will want to pick a sweater that is so retina-burning colorful that the only way people will be able to look at you is through one of those foil-covered boxes that ... students make so they can look at a solar eclipse. But color alone isn't going to win you any contests. You'll want to break into the third dimension. The more stuff you have hanging off your sweater, the better."

If you decide to host an ugly Christmas sweater party this year, here are some edited tips excerpted from the *Ugly Christmas Sweater Party Book* to help you determine the ugliest sweater of them all.

Authentic ugliness. Typically these gems are knitted from the finest yarn a clearance aisle can produce, and it's not uncommon to see sweaters featuring a random sampling of holiday images, such as reindeer, or stockings hanging from a fireplace mantel, directly adjacent to not-so-holiday images such as kittens.

Most crafty. In the world of ugly Christmas sweaters, there is a special breed of do-it-yourselfers who deserve to be recognized for their imaginative, and sometimes disturbing, minds. Contestants should be rewarded for their creative incorporation of candy canes, mistletoe, ribbons, bells—and anything else that engages the five senses—into the ugly Christmas sweater party experience.

Mechanically gifted. [This award] belongs to a special individual who likely spent way too much time and way too much money to create a custom ugly Christmas sweater (or perhaps an entire outfit). This person's getup tends to be highly flammable, and, depending on his or her knowledge of circuitry, could pose multiple hazards to self and others. The victor of this category should be fairly obvious.—SEP

Knit wits

Don we now our ugly Christmas sweaters

GUY RHODES

By Stephanie E. Ponder

EVERYONE I KNOW has favorite holiday traditions. They range from rituals handed down through generations to quirky accidents that seem to work their way into seasonal celebrations. Lately I've noticed a new tradition taking hold among friends and colleagues: the ugly Christmas sweater party.

The origin of these parties is up for debate, but Costco member Adam Paulson, one-third of Team Ugly—a group of friends who started www.uglychristmassweaterparty.com—writes that Vancouver, British Columbia, has been holding an ugly-sweater charity event since 2001. Cities such as Toronto; Kansas City, Kansas; and Indianapolis have been hosting similar charity events for the past six or seven years.

Paulson has worked on the website with college friends Brian Miller and Kevin Wool since its inception in 2006. The trio, who all live in northern Indiana, had attended a few ugly-sweater parties, and Miller purchased the domain in anticipation of the themed shindigs taking off.

The site operated primarily as a blog until 2009, when, explains Paulson, people started "emailing the blog, letting Brian know that they were having a real tough time finding ugly Christmas sweaters. So we saw an opportunity to monetize the URL as well as start one of the most unique companies on the World

The Costco Connection

Ugly Christmas Sweater Party Book is not available at Costco; it can be purchased at www.abramsbooks.com. Costco warehouses do carry a variety of food, beverages and supplies for hosting the best ugly Christmas sweater party ever.

Friends (from left to right) Brian Miller, Adam Paulson and Kevin Wool swim in a sea of ugly sweaters. And just one of hundreds of "ugly" sweaters (inset) the guys have found.

Wide Web. We had all been to a couple ugly Christmas sweater parties before we started the company and saw how much fun people were having."

Paulson says that on November 14, 2009, he went to Goodwill and bought nearly 60 sweaters. The guys photographed all of them and put the pictures online at the website. They sold out in a day.

"From there we went from Goodwill to Goodwill, picking them up," Paulson tells *The Connection*. After storing more sweaters than a person could wear in one holiday season, the friends found a storage facility and now have a scout who helps with finding ugly sweaters.

Eventually an agent approached Team Ugly and asked them to put together a book proposal. Once the proposal was approved, the trio set out to write the *Ugly Christmas Sweater Party Book* (Abrams, 2011).

It's filled with party ideas for throwing your own ugly Christmas sweater party (see sidebar) and, of course, many photos of ugly Christmas sweaters.

"The book is a glimpse into the minds of three guys who are trying to plan a fun party," laughs Paulson. "The best parties are planned by women, and this book shows why." [E]



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Prices will vary in some locations. Limited to stock on hand. No rain checks.

\$50 OFF

Panasonic HDC-SD40 Camcorder Kit

The HD SD40 features a 16.8x optical zoom, full HD 1080 stereo recording and a crisp 2.7" LCD screen. Intelligent Audio automatically chooses settings for the shooting conditions you are in. Includes 8 GB card and carrying case.

ITEM #605926



VALID DECEMBER 1-DECEMBER 24, 2011

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TEAC MC-DX90i Music System

Slim Hi-Fi stereo system plays and charges iPhone and iPod, CD Player, FM Tuner, auxiliary input and stand alone subwoofer.

ITEM #599090



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SanDisk Flash Memory Cards and Flash Drives

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ITEM #433222, #344977, #597249, #572165, #484442



VALID DECEMBER 1-DECEMBER 24, 2011

\$10 OFF

Sansa Clip Zip 8 GB MP3 Player

Clip on and enjoy the ultimate on-the-go music experience with color screen, FM radio, voice recorder, stopwatch and more.

ITEM #591821



VALID DECEMBER 1-DECEMBER 24, 2011

\$10 OFF

Able Planet Noise Cancelling Headphones

Active noise cancelling headphones feature a foldable design, adjustable headband, in-line volume control, soft carry pouch and patented LINX AUDIO® Technology.

ITEM #580180



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Sony® DVP-FX96 9" Portable DVD Player

Enjoy sharp, crisp video and images with high resolution. Features a 9" wide swivel screen for easy viewing plus a six-hour rechargeable battery for extended use.

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Panasonic KX-TG7624SK Link-to-Cell Telephone with 4 Handsets

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ITEM #568606



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Logitech® Harmony® 650 Universal Remote

Control up to five devices with the Harmony® 650, which features a color screen and icons for your favorite channels. One-click activity buttons allow you to "Watch TV," "Watch a DVD" or "Listen to Music."

ITEM #600650



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\$100 OFF

Sony® BDV-T58 3D Blu-ray Disc Home Theater System

Experience 3D Blu-ray Disc movies, powerful 5.1-channel HD surround sound and built in Wi-Fi for streaming. Includes iPhone/iPod dock and HDMI cable.

ITEM #574058



VALID DECEMBER 4-DECEMBER 11, 2011

\$300 OFF

LG 47LW5700 47" Class 3D 1080p Edge-Lit LED LCD HDTV

Enjoy stunning 3D at home with LG's Cinema 3D technology. Features TruMotion 120Hz refresh rate, Smart TV for web browsing, four pairs 3D glasses and is Wi-Fi-Ready (Adapter Included).

ITEM #704701



VALID DECEMBER 4-DECEMBER 17, 2011

\$500 OFF

LG 55LW5700 55" Class 3D 1080p Edge-Lit LED LCD HDTV

Get all the depth of 3D with LG's Cinema 3D technology and TruMotion 120Hz refresh rate. Features Smart TV for web browsing, four pairs 3D glasses and is Wi-Fi-Ready (Adapter Included).

ITEM #955570



VALID DECEMBER 4-DECEMBER 24, 2011

\$20 OFF

Sony® BDP-BX18 Blu-ray Disc™ Player

Enjoy Blu-ray Disc movies in Full HD 1080p, instantly stream movies, music and more with popular apps like Netflix, YouTube, Hulu Plus and Pandora (Ethernet connection required). Includes HDMI cable.

ITEM #618182



VALID DECEMBER 4-DECEMBER 24, 2011

\$30 OFF

Panasonic Lumix DMC-FH27 Camera Kit

Shoot high-quality images with a wide-angle Leica lens that has a powerful 8x zoom lens. This slim and stylish camera also features 0.3 second auto focus, HD movie recording and 3" touch screen. Includes 4 GB card and leather case. Available in red, black and silver. Colors may vary by location.

ITEM #567337



VALID DECEMBER 4-DECEMBER 24, 2011

\$30 OFF

Panasonic 2.1 Sound Bar with Subwoofer

Sound bar installs horizontally or vertically as two towers with included stands, complimented by 120 Watt subwoofer. Features two HDMI inputs, and includes a HDMI cable and optical cable.

ITEM #601515



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Panasonic Stainless Steel Microwave

This 1.6-cubic-foot countertop microwave offers Inverter technology, 1250 watts of power, One-Touch sensor cooking and reheating, and full button control panel.

ITEM #196026



VALID DECEMBER 8-DECEMBER 18, 2011

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Astak CM-MOLE IP Camera with Night Vision

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\$300 OFF

Sharp LC-60LE633U 60" 1080p LED LCD HDTV

This breathtaking full HD 1080p LED uses AquaMotion 240 to provide smooth, crisp images. Also features built-in WiFi, Smart TV and dual USB inputs.

ITEM #606330



VALID DECEMBER 11-DECEMBER 18, 2011

\$15 OFF

Simplicity SMF2-B1 Full-Motion TV Wall Mount

Allows smooth tilt with the touch of a finger and adjusts to multiple viewing positions. Fits TVs 19" to 47" and up to 60 pounds.

ITEM #560756



VALID DECEMBER 11-DECEMBER 24, 2011

\$20 OFF

Simplicity SXDP5-B1 Universal Large TV Wall Mount

Excellent for viewing from the couch, bed or even the floor with this low-profile tilting TV mount. Fits TV's 32" to 65" and up to 125 pounds

ITEM #938551, #937654



VALID DECEMBER 11-DECEMBER 24, 2011

\$40 OFF

Simplicity SLF4-B1 Universal Full-Motion TV Wall Mount

Extends, retracts, tilts and swivels in all directions for the best possible viewing angle. Fits TVs 37" to 60" and up to 125 pounds.

ITEM #739440, #538664



VALID DECEMBER 11-DECEMBER 24, 2011

\$10 OFF

WireLogic HDTV Cable Kit

These HDMI High Speed Cables with Ethernet maximize viewing for all HDTV's, including 3D TV's. Includes two 9' HDMI cables, 1 oz. CleanScreen, and one microfiber cloth.

ITEM #571278



VALID DECEMBER 11-DECEMBER 24, 2011

\$70 OFF

Nikon CoolPix S4100

When life moves fast, catch it with the S4100. Features 14 MP resolution, 5x wide-angle Nikkor zoom lens, 3" touch screen and 720p HD movie capability. Includes 4 GB card and case. Available in plum, red, silver and black. Colors may vary by location.

ITEM #569860



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\$200 OFF

Samsung UN46D6050 46" Class 1080p Edge-Lit LED LCD HDTV

This ultra-slim 46" LED provides amazing HD 1080p picture quality to watch your favorite TV programs. Features Smart TV to easily explore movies, TV shows and Samsung apps. Wi-Fi-ready (LinkStick included) with SRS TheaterSound HD.

ITEM #946650



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*Based on LG consumer perception study comparing overall 3D experience of LG Cinema 3D TV vs. Samsung and Sony active 3D TVs in factory default settings, May 2011. LG TV model 47LW5600 with model AG-F200 glasses; Samsung TV model UN46D6420 with model SSG-3100GB glasses; Sony TV model KDL-46EX723 with model TDGBR100/B glasses.

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Last-minute ideas for tech fans

Gadgets for gifts

By Tim Talevich

IT'S NOT TOO LATE to pick up that perfect (and useful) gift for the gadget lover on your list. Here's a look at what's hot this year at Costco, in the warehouses and online at Costco.com.

For **TVs**, the big buzz continues to be about Internet-connected TVs and 3D. An Internet-connected TV gives you instant access to a growing library of movies and programs that you stream from the Internet and to special versions of sites such as Facebook, Pandora and YouTube.

Streaming is done through your home's wireless network; the question is what device you'll use for this. Options include going through a **wireless-ready TV** or a separate device, such as certain **Blu-ray Disc players** or a **set-top box** (for example, the Roku streaming player).

Read the packaging to make the right choice for your home setup. For TVs, wording such as "Wi-Fi" or "built-in Wi-Fi" means it's ready to connect to your home network out of the box; "Wi-Fi ready" means you'll need an extra device, such as an adapter, to receive the wireless signal. In regard to Blu-ray players, some have built-in Wi-Fi, others need an adapter and some require an Ethernet cable for Internet access.

Note that manufacturers have unique

agreements with various websites. Nearly all models offer access to big sites such as Netflix. You can get updated lists on the manufacturers' websites.

Also hot for TVs is 3D. This year many more movies are available in this growing format. You still have the choice between passive and active **3D TVs**, the former using less expensive glasses (like the kind you wear in a movie theater), the latter using rechargeable glasses, which offer full 1080p HD to each eye for extra impact.

You'll also find an impressive array of **larger HDTVs** this year—from 55 inches up to 70 inches—that are more energy efficient than previous models. Time for an upgrade?

A must-have addition to your HDTV is a sound system to create a home theater. You can go the full route with an **audio/video receiver and speakers**, and get fantastic results. Or, upgrade with a **complete home theater package**, which includes receiver, speakers and Blu-ray Disc player. Another

option is a **sound bar**, which offers an affordable and easy-to-set-up way to fill your room with all the music and sound effects from shows and movies.

If you're looking at **cameras**, a digital SLR is the essential tool for avid photographers, but beginners can get great results as well by starting out with the camera's automatic mode and gradually learning the wide array of advanced tools. On the other end of the spectrum, the smaller point-and-shoots offer the ultimate in quick and easy photography. See the "Buyer's Pick" on the next page for yet another option.

Watch for two exciting advancements in the camera world: More and more models take HD-quality video—which is great because you can display your home videos on your big screen—and more have advanced CMOS image sensors, which greatly improve picture quality in low-light situations.

Check Costco.com for **camera accessories** to go along with your purchase. For example, the Targus DSLR accessory kit features a tripod, camera bag and filters that fit certain lens sizes.

For computer users, **tablet PCs** continue to grow in popularity. These ultra-thin, lightweight devices let you surf the Web, read email, play games, watch movies and so on.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 59

The Costco Connection

You can find a full selection of the products mentioned here, along with a wide variety of other electronics, in Costco warehouses and online at Costco.com.



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HD video calling and sharing—however, whatever, wherever you like

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 57

You can do more and more on tablets these days, thanks to the libraries of apps that are growing by leaps and bounds. Check out the hottest new apps at the Android Market.

Still looking? Consider the latest generation of **storage devices** to back up your PC files. The Seagate GoFlex Home stores up to 2 terabytes of data, and automatically backs up your files through your home wireless network. You can even access the drive remotely through your smartphone.

There are also several clever gift ideas for tablet users. One is the iHome **iPad/iPhone/iPod speaker dock**, which recharges your device and is portable so that you can play your music anywhere. Or, if you have a tablet PC or smartphone that is Bluetooth compatible (and most are), you can stream your music to a **wireless speaker system**.

Costco also features two gifts that don't necessarily fit in a Christmas stocking, but are great presents. Many electronics come with free technical support from **Costco Concierge**, which covers the lifetime of the product. You can find out more about this service in the warehouses and at Costco.com (search "Concierge"). Also, you can purchase **extended warranties** for new TVs at a great value. [H]

Buyer's pick

Dave Greek
Electronics buyer
Costco.com



PHOTOGRAPHERS HAVE traditionally had two choices when it comes to buying a camera: the high-end digital SLR (DSLR), with its interchangeable lenses and powerful programs (and high price), and the point-and-shoot, a handy palm-size camera that is great for capturing everyday moments but lacks creative tools.

Now there's a new option somewhere in the middle: the compact system camera. These cameras have many of the same creative capabilities as DSLRs but are much closer in size to a point-and-shoot. In short, they act like a DSLR, but feel like a point-and-shoot.

A perfect example is the Olympus PEN E-PL1. At just 1.6 inches deep, it fits comfortably in your hand, but it's packed with features, including interchangeable lenses, the new easy-to-use Live Guide for

the best photographic effects, a large image sensor and one-touch HD video capture, to name a few.

I found Live Guide a great way to get excellent shots. It allows you to adjust settings while looking at the image, with the results displayed live on the screen before you shoot. And at 12.3 megapixels, the E-PL1's Live MOS image sensor is eight times larger than the average point-and-shoot sensor. That means accurate color fidelity, excellent range and detailed image capture in both lighted and shadowed areas.

Best of all, the E-PL1 is currently offered at Costco.com at a phenomenal value. It comes with a two-lens kit, gadget bag and 4 GB memory card (item #609031). [H]



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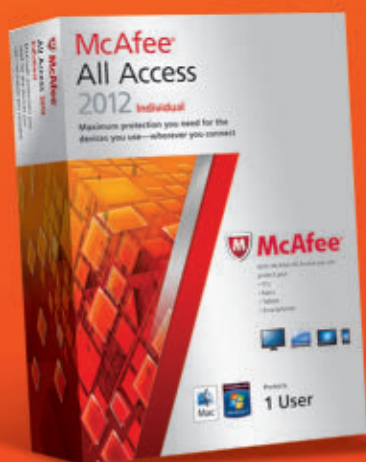
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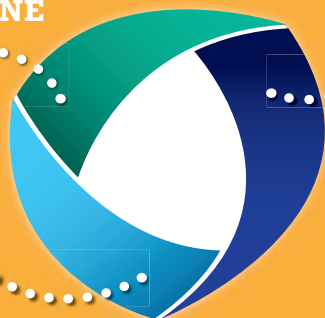


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The SAD season

Dealing with the winter blues

By Heidi Smith Luedtke

FEELING FATIGUED and out of sorts? Your mood and motivation may be subject to the season. Experts say that 5 to 10 percent of people suffer from seasonal affective disorder (SAD), and millions more experience milder winter blues.

Common symptoms include low energy, cravings for high-carbohydrate foods such as pasta and pastries, sadness and despair, social withdrawal, loss of libido and difficulty concentrating. Symptoms may appear as early as September; for most people, they arrive in December or January and lift in the spring, says Norman Rosenthal, M.D., clinical professor of psychiatry at Georgetown University School of Medicine and author of *Winter Blues: Everything You Need to Know to Beat Seasonal Affective Disorder* (The Guilford Press, 2005). Rates are lowest at the equator and highest where light is in short supply.

Winter blues often go untreated because people don't realize they are depressed, says Costco member Stewart Shankman, associate professor of psychology at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Gloomy moods may be less noticeable than physical symptoms such as exhaustion, weight gain and sleep disturbances. A seasonal cycle suggests you've got winter blues, not an underactive thyroid, low blood sugar or chronic fatigue. Fight back with the following self-care strategies.

Lighten up. Low-light conditions tell the body to produce melatonin, which makes you feel drowsy. Open the shades or go outside for some rays. If you still feel drained, use a therapeutic light box. "Models with intensities from 2,500 to 10,000 lux are considered effective," says Rosenthal.

Thirty years of clinical research demonstrate the safety and effectiveness of white fluorescent light. Start with 15 minutes of therapy in the early-morning hours. If your energy levels don't rebound after a week, increase your light exposure in five-minute

increments. Finding the right regimen is important. Rosenthal cautions, "Too much light can make you feel overstimulated, like you've had too much caffeine."

Fuel well. Indulging carbohydrate cravings provides only short-term satisfaction, says nutritional psychotherapist Julia Ross, executive director of Recovery Systems Clinic in Mill Valley, California, and author of *The Mood Cure* (Viking, 2002). Sweet or starchy foods cause blood sugar to spike and then plummet, leaving you wanting another fast fix. A protein-rich diet sustains well-being because it provides the amino acid tryptophan. Without it, the body can't make serotonin, one of the brain's feel-good chemicals. Ross recommends eating 20 to 30 grams of protein per meal to boost mood.

Supplement. If your diet is deficient, tryptophan supplements—either 5-hydroxytryptophan or L-tryptophan—may help, says Ross. Vitamins can also improve your outlook. Most people are deficient in vitamin D₃, which is produced in the body through exposure to sunlight, says Rosenthal. Vitamin D is crucial for calcium absorption, and it also supports heart health and immune system functioning. Get a blood test from your doctor to check your level. Some people report improved mood after taking vitamin D₃ supplements.

Move it. Physical exercise is an effective way to banish the blues year-round. Exercise boosts serotonin production, increases oxygen flow to the brain and diminishes the body's response to stress. Good nutrition and sunlight amplify these benefits. Walk, run or cycle outside if possible. Even on cloudy days, the light is much more intense outdoors. A treadmill or stationary bike in front of a light

box is a good alternative if it's too cold or icy to go out.

Stress less. Holiday hassles and workplace pressures can make matters worse. "Schedule activities that will give you pleasure in your life," says Shankman. Take a class or work on a project. Go to your book club meeting, even if you're not feeling sociable. People are one of the most powerful and plentiful sources of joy in life. Spend alone

CONTINUED ON PAGE 66



PHOTODISC

Costco Connection

Costco and Costco.com offer light boxes, supplements, sleep aids and exercise equipment.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 65

time in meditation, says Rosenthal. It calms and energizes body and mind.

Schedule sleep. Oversleeping can create a vicious cycle. Keep a consistent sleep routine and get up early. "The power of that early-morning light is important," says Rosenthal. It suppresses melatonin and stimulates serotonin production. Unless you're a habitually long sleeper, set your alarm or use a dawn-simulating lamp to wake you after an eight- or nine-hour night. Good habits keep your biological rhythms steady.

Go pro. If your own efforts don't do the job or you think about harming yourself, seek professional treatment. Antidepressants are prescribed to treat SAD. A therapist can also help you reframe negative thoughts that drag you down and give homework assignments to encourage effective coping behavior, says Shankman. Don't hibernate until spring. Winter can (and should) be wonderful. ☺

Costco member Heidi Smith Luedtke is a personality psychologist who writes about well-being, self-improvement and relationship skills.

Get-happy habits to practice all year long

1. Ask for help. Studies show people are twice as likely to say yes to a request for help as you'd predict.
2. Phone a friend. Social connections make life meaningful. A cheerful voice soothes and inspires.
3. Affirm yourself. Post positive self-statements where you'll see them frequently.
4. Keep a gratitude journal. Counting your blessings provides fast-acting, long-lasting fulfillment.
5. Get away. A relaxing vacation may be just what you need. Many people with severe SAD plan annual vacations to high-light destinations.—HSL

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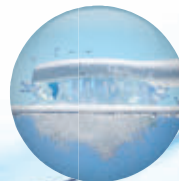
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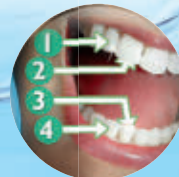
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SEASONAL HEALTH

Cold weather and arthritis

By John Gallucci Jr.



WINTER IS HERE and the cold air is flowing in. As a physical therapist, I see repeatedly an increase in patient complaints every fall and winter.

The most common symptoms are pain, swelling and stiffness in the joints. Is it the cold weather? Maybe, but it is the change in people's lifestyles too. In the Northeast we see a dramatic change in patients' lifestyles due to daylight becoming shorter and the weather making it more difficult to keep active. Exercise assists with all of the symptoms of arthritis, so a decrease in activity will probably cause an increase in arthritic symptoms.

Arthritis is inflammation (or swelling) of one or more joints. Research has shown that there are 100 different types of arthritis, which involves the breakdown of cartilage. Cartilage normally protects a joint, allowing it to move smoothly, and absorbs shock when pressure is placed on the joint, such as during walking. Without the normal amount of cartilage, the bones meeting at the joint rub together, causing pain, swelling and stiffness.

There are several easy ways to decrease arthritis symptoms this winter. First, continue good physical activity to maintain the integrity of your joints. Daily activity helps to increase circulation, which decreases swelling and stiffness, and is the preferred treatment for osteoarthritis and other types of joint inflammation. Exercise can also help relieve pain and fatigue, and improve muscle and bone strength.

Other activities to follow during the winter months include low-impact aerobics, range-of-motion exercises for flexibility, strength training for muscle tone, heat or ice-water therapy, massage and sleep. Sleeping eight to 10 hours a night and taking naps during the day can help you recover from a flare-up more quickly and may even help prevent flare-ups. Also, don't stay in one position for too long, and avoid positions or movements that place extra stress on sore joints.

It might also be good to change your home to make activities easier. For example, install grab bars in the shower, the tub and near the toilet, and do stress-reducing activities such as yoga. Eat a healthy diet full of fruits and vegetables, which contain important vitamins and minerals, especially vitamin E. If possible, avoid caffeine, alcohol and nicotine, as these products have a drying effect on cartilage. If you are overweight, weight loss can greatly relieve joint pain in the legs and feet. Ten minutes of gentle stretching exercises every morning to relax stiff muscles can also help.

If you have arthritis symptoms, these easy tips should help you deal with the colder months of winter. If your symptoms persist, be sure to follow up with your physician. Your physician will make decisions based on the exacerbation of symptoms and likely treat you with pharmacological agents and formal physical therapy treatment. [E]

Costco member John Gallucci Jr. is president of JAG Physical Therapy (<http://jagpt.com>) and medical coordinator for Major League Soccer.

Malaria vaccine looks promising

TRIALS OF AN experimental vaccine have shown initial results of cutting in half the risk of getting malaria. That would seriously turn the tables on a disease responsible for 20 percent of childhood deaths in Africa per year.

The World Health Organization reports that half of the world's population—3.4 billion people—are at risk of malaria. Endemic in 100 countries worldwide, malaria affects about 250 million people each year, resulting in nearly 900,000 deaths.

Data about the experimental vaccine was presented in October at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Malaria Forum conference in Seattle, based on

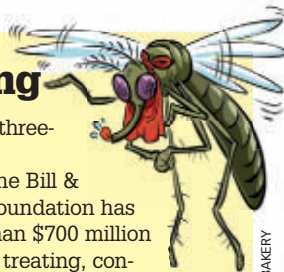
the first part of a three-stage trial.

Since 1994, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has awarded more than \$700 million in grants toward treating, controlling and eradicating malaria.

"Eradicating malaria is not a vague, unrealistic aspiration but a tough, ambitious goal that can be reached within the next few decades," said Bill Gates as reported by Reuters' coverage of the event.

Gates indicated that his foundation is devoting a substantial increase in funding to "shrink the malaria map."

—David Wight



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Wired for health

Electronic health records promise benefits for patients and doctors alike

By Jessica Cerretani

HAVE YOU EVER wished you could ask your doctor a non-urgent medical question without playing phone tag, or check your lab test results from your smartphone? If your physician's office uses a comprehensive electronic health record system that includes "patient portal" capability, these scenarios could already be at your fingertips.

An electronic health record (EHR) is a digital version of a patient's medical history—test results, medications, illnesses, family history and more. Some EHR systems (such as that offered through Costco) include a patient portal function that allows the patient to access some or all of this information electronically and to contact his or her physician's office with routine requests, such as scheduling appointments or renewing prescriptions, via secure email.

The number of medical professionals who rely on EHRs is increasing: According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 50 percent of U.S. physicians currently use some sort of EHR system. Other surveys suggest that about a quarter of physicians who use EHRs also offer patient portals. Those numbers are expected to rise, thanks to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which provides financial incentives to doctors who use EHRs that meet certain standards.

"An EHR gives your doctor a complete view of your medical record in one place," says Blackford Middleton, M.D., director of clinical informatics for Partners HealthCare in Massachusetts. "I often advise people not to see a doctor unless he or she has an EHR system."

In good health

There's no doubt that EHRs can offer conveniences for patients and doctors alike. "A

nurse or technician enters the patient's vital signs and medical history in the computer," explains Lauren Chasin, M.D., an Idaho-based family physician who began using an EHR system last year. "That frees up my time to ask more targeted questions, and the patient doesn't have to keep repeating the same information over and over. The EHR helps both of us make the most of the visit."

"Our patients really like that we can prescribe electronically," says Aisha Ikramuddin, the office manager for a New Jersey allergy clinic that recently adopted an EHR system through Costco Services. "They can watch the doctor send the prescription to their pharmacy over a secure Internet connection, so they know it's been taken care of before they even leave the office."

The benefits don't end there. A growing body of evidence suggests that the use of EHRs may even improve health. One 2011 study, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, found that patients with diabetes whose physicians use electronic health records are better able to manage the condition.

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For members who are healthcare providers, Costco offers an electronic health record (EHR) and practice management (PM) solution provided by Etransmedia Technology Inc., which includes Allscripts™ MyWay, with exclusive member pricing. Those who purchase by February 3, 2012, will receive a \$100 Costco Cash card.

Physicians may be eligible for up to \$44,000 in federal stimulus incentives. For details, visit Costco.com and search "EHR20," or call toll-free 1-877-347-6114.

Eligibility requirements apply. See www.costcoehr.com for details.


Another recent study showed that patients whose physicians used EHRs had better control over their high blood pressure than patients whose doctors don't use these systems. EHRs can also prevent medical errors by ensuring that doctors prescribe the correct medication and don't miss patient allergies or drug interactions.

A dose of caution

EHRs are not without controversy, and critics worry that the systems could threaten patient privacy by putting health information online. While privacy breaches have occurred, Middleton points out that human error—rather than technical glitches in EHR systems—is usually to blame, and can be remedied through better user training.

If privacy is violated, protections are in place: Data is encrypted, and physicians can check who has accessed the information electronically—perks not possible with paper records. Overall, says Middleton, "the benefits of EHRs absolutely outweigh the potential risks."

All systems go

As with most technologies, EHRs are expected to become even more user-friendly over time. Some systems that include patient portals already allow patients to view their record from mobile devices. Combined with apps that help users track their weight, nutrition and fitness, EHRs could someday enhance what Chasin says is already a major advantage of digital care: helping patients become active partners in their healthcare. "EHRs streamline things for doctors," she says. "But they're especially fantastic from a patient perspective." 

Jessica Cerretani is a Boston-based freelancer who writes about a variety of health and wellness topics.



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Surf or turf

Is cruising really travel?



By Rick Steves

THERE ARE TRAVELERS and there are tourists. There is travel and there is hedonism. I've long thought that cruising was hedonism for tourists. In fact, I've built a career championing the beauties of experiencing Europe independently ... through the back door. And that's about as far from cruising as you can get.

My newest guidebook — *Rick Steves' Mediterranean Cruise Ports* — is the first and only cruising guidebook written by someone with a healthy skepticism about cruises. I've left the cruise-ship rundowns to the industry aficionados, and focused my book on what I consider the main attraction: some of the most exciting cities in Europe. Even if you have just eight hours in port, you can still ramble the colorful Ramblas of Barcelona, kick the pebbles that stuck in Julius Caesar's sandals at the Roman Forum, hike to the top of Athens' Acropolis, and hear the Muslim call to prayer warble across the rooftops from an Istanbul minaret. Yes, I know, you could spend a lifetime in Florence. But if you've only got a few hours ... I have a plan for you.

I've just returned from enjoying back-to-back Mediterranean cruises myself. I visited 12 ports in two weeks. Dancing my nights away under starry, starry skies at sea, I shared a ship with 3,000 people whose priorities seemed to be shopping, gambling,

eating, drinking, and sightseeing — often in that order. Yes, for many of these cruisers, the experience was hedonism plain and simple. But for many others, cruising has become an efficient, affordable, and enjoyable way to enjoy the best of both surf and turf.

For me, it was two weeks toggling between life on shore and life on board — a time filled with culture, camaraderie, and calories. As soon as I returned to the ship after a day exploring, I'd plop my wallet into the top drawer of my dresser and rejoin that fantasy, cashless cruise ship world.

I was impressed by the number of passengers who bounded down the gangway as soon as it was open, determined to get the most out of each hour in port. These are the people who are enjoying my new guidebook. Its goal — and my challenge as its author — is to empower those who enjoy the fun, efficiency, and economy of cruising with the information necessary to get the very most out of their time in port.

So, is cruising really travel? It depends on the cruiser. I enjoyed a relaxing vacation at sea, but each day in port I managed to venture away from the cruise crowds. Whether it was in a farmer's market in Livorno, a tapas bar in Barcelona, or a dusty corner of



Athens' Agora, I tried to get out of my comfort zone and experience a slice of real Europe. While there's plenty of fun on board for cruisers, your best memories will come from back-door adventures enjoyed on land.

Rick Steves has spent 100 days every year since 1973 exploring Europe. Rick produces a public television series, a public radio show, and a podcast; writes a bestselling series of guidebooks and a nationally syndicated newspaper column.

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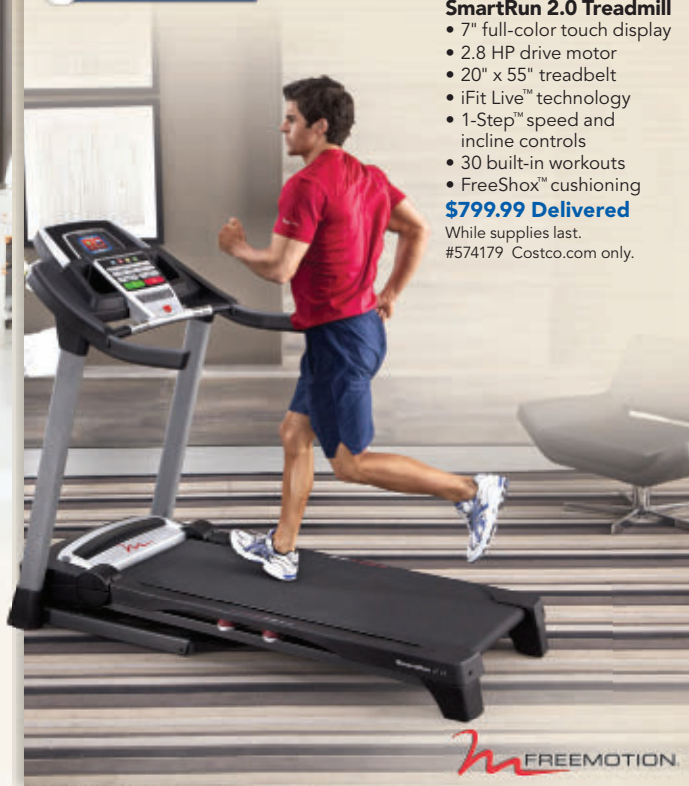
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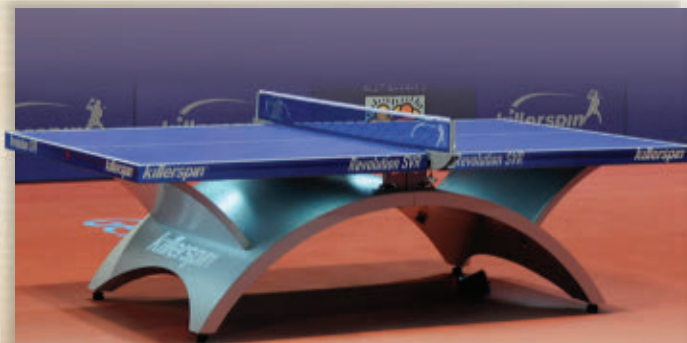
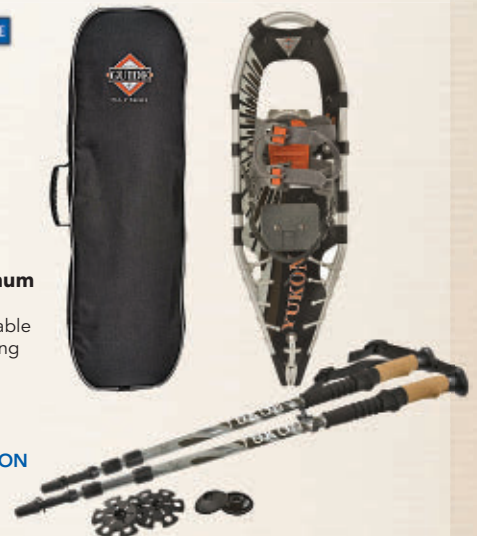
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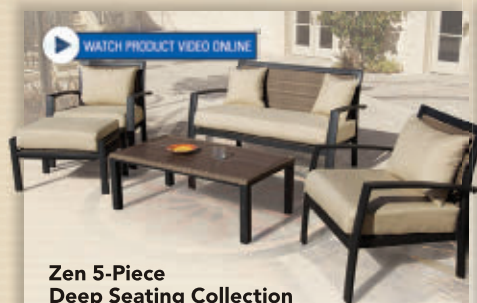
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Oregon SCIENTIFIC



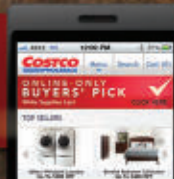
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Easy-to-use GPS navigator with eco-Route™.

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The thin nüvi 1300LM has a widescreen display, yet it's slim and light enough to take along on all your travels. This affordable GPS comes with free lifetime map updates, announces streets by name, offers pedestrian navigation options and calculates a more fuel-efficient route with ecoRoute™.

Includes Free Lifetime Map Updates

With free lifetime map[†] updates, you always have the most up-to-date maps, points of interest (POIs) and navigation information available at your fingertips. Map updates are available for download up to four times a year with no subscription or update fees and no expiration dates.

See More

With nüvi 1300LM's widescreen display, you'll always get the big picture. View map detail, driving directions, photos and more in bright, brilliant color. Its sunlight-readable, 4.3" (10.92 cm) display is easy to read—from any direction.

Get Turn-by-Turn Directions

nüvi 1300LM's intuitive interface greets you with two simple prompts: "Where To?" and "View Map." Touch the color screen to easily look up addresses and services and get voice-prompted, turn-by-turn directions that speak street names to your destination. It comes preloaded with City Navigator® NT street maps for the continental U.S., Hawaii

and Puerto Rico, millions of POIs, and 2D or 3D maps. Its digital elevation maps show you shaded contours at higher zoom levels, giving you a big picture of the surrounding terrain. With the 1300LM's enhanced user interface, you can slide your finger to conveniently scroll between screens. You also can upload custom POIs. And with HotFix® satellite prediction, nüvi calculates your position faster to get you there quickly.

Go Beyond Navigation

Navigation is just the beginning. nüvi 1300LM saves you gas and money with ecoRoute—a green feature that calculates the most fuel-efficient route, tracks fuel usage and more. The 1300LM includes many travel tools, including JPEG picture viewer, world travel clock with time zones, currency converter, measurement converter, calculator and more. With photo navigation, you can download pictures from Garmin Connect™ Photos and navigate to them. It's also compatible with Lifetime traffic alerts (receiver purchase required). With its "Where Am I?" emergency locator, you always know your location. Simply tap the screen to get your exact latitude and longitude coordinates, the nearest address and intersection, and the closest hospitals, police stations and fuel stations. The nüvi 1300LM features Garmin Lock™, an anti-theft feature, and is compatible with our free Garmin Garage™ where you can download custom voices and vehicles. Enhance your travel experience with optional plug-in microSD™ cards.

[†]Free lifetime map updates entitle you to receive up to four map data updates per year, when and as such updates are made available on the Garmin website, for this specific Garmin product only, until this product's useful life expires or Garmin no longer receives map data from its third-party supplier, whichever is shorter. The updates you receive will be updates to the same geographic map data originally included with your Garmin product when originally purchased. Garmin may terminate your lifetime map updates at any time if you violate any of the terms of the End User License Agreement accompanying your nüvi product.



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2
PACK

RACOR

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Case and welding accessories included.

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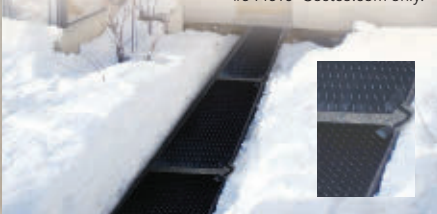
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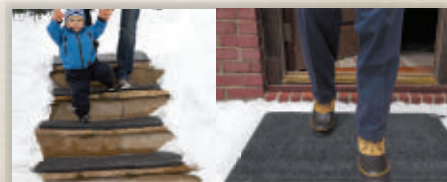
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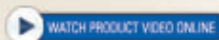
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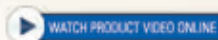
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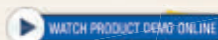


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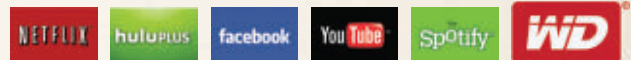
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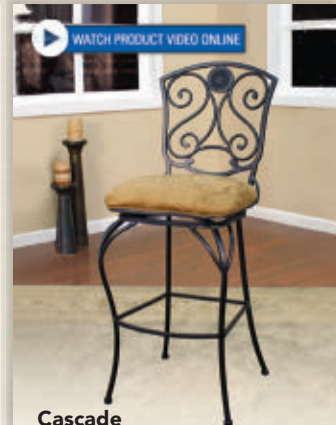
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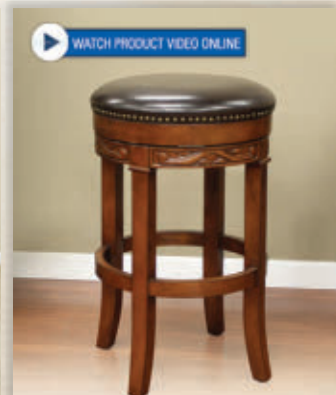
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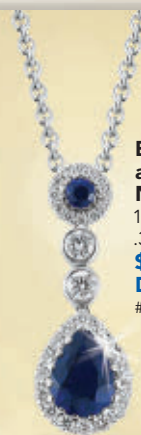
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with Kirkland Signature Daily Multi Pack.

Get off to a great start every morning with Kirkland Signature Daily Multi Pack. With 25 key vitamins and minerals, plus B-50 vitamins and Asian ginseng extract, Kirkland Signature Daily Multi Pack makes it easier than ever to get the nutrition you need to start your day right. Take Kirkland Signature Daily Multi Pack and get ready for a great day.



USP has tested and verified this Kirkland Signature supplement for its ingredients, potency and manufacturing process. USP sets official standards for dietary supplements. See www.usp-dsvp.org.

Exclusively from Costco Wholesale



*These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

WAREHOUSE/COSTCO.COM | AVAILABLE NOW

11-CC-1009rd



Kirkland Signature Vitamin D3 for Bone Health, Immune Health, Colon Health and Breast Health.*

Any Questions?

Natural sources of vitamin D are limited, and if you are not getting enough exposure to the sun, you may have inadequate vitamin D levels. Supplementing with Kirkland Signature Vitamin D3 2000 I.U. is the surefire way to make certain you are getting your daily supply of this crucial, body-supporting nutrient.*



USP has tested and verified this Kirkland Signature supplement for its ingredients, potency and manufacturing process. USP sets official standards for dietary supplements. See www.usp-dsnp.org.

*These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

11-CC-1067-ra

Exclusively from Costco Wholesale
WAREHOUSE/COSTCO.COM | AVAILABLE NOW

At your service

Costco's Concierge Services provides the perfect fix



Simple, direct and fast is the way to address tech issues.

IRIDIO PHOTOGRAPHY

BuyingSmart

Consumer reporter **Pat Volchok** gives a behind-the-scenes look at Costco products and services. Send your questions about this article to: **buyingsmart@costco.com**.

More in archives

On Costco.com, enter "Connection." At Online Edition, search "buyingsmart."

WHAT IF THERE was a technical support center you could call for free setup and assistance for the lifetime of your computer, television or tablet? And what if the average call time to reach one of the service's live, knowledgeable agents was about 20 seconds and most issues were resolved in less than 20 minutes? If you're a Costco member, all this and more is available to you through Costco Concierge Services at 1-866-861-0450.

Costco Concierge Services (CCS) has expert-level technicians offering free technical support seven days a week, 17 hours per day (excluding holidays), to help members with a whole cartload of electronic products offered by Costco warehouses or Costco.com.

More than 4 million members have made the call to CCS since its introduction five years ago—but I've not been one of them.

However, after talking with Costco Concierge Operations buyer Franny Mooney I'm now a user—and a believer.

Here's our conversation.

Pat Volchok: *I have a feeling I'm going to kick myself for not using Costco Concierge Services. Tell me about the program.*

Franny Mooney: We realize that, for many people, setting up and operating today's electronics can be complex. This is why we offer free tech support for the lifetime of many of our devices. We assist with setup, product use, integration with other electronic devices and any other technical questions our members may have. If a member's product needs in-warranty repair, we'll guide him or her through the process from start to finish.

PV: *I thought this program was only available during Costco's 90-day electronics return time or was part of the product's warranty.*

FM: Costco Concierge Services is separate. We average more than 3,000 calls a day, offering free tech support for the lifetime of all televisions, computers, touch-screen tablets, projectors, cameras, camcorders, MP3 players, home theater systems, DVD and Blu-ray players, all-in-one printers (stand-alone), monitors (stand-alone), routers and pressure washers purchased from a Costco warehouse or Costco.com.

Speaking of warranties, CCS has repaired nearly 100,000 TVs and computers that were beyond the manufacturers' warranties, which Costco members otherwise would have had to pay for.

"Costco has established the ultimate tech-support service for its customers. Prior to your service, one was at the mercy of the vendor's tech support: waiting, disconnections, multiple transfers to different technicians/engineers. You have set the standard for companies' tech support."

*Cliff F.
San Francisco, CA*

PV: OK, you've piqued my interest. Walk me through the steps.

FM: It's easy. After calling the toll-free number—1-866-861-0450—the member answers two questions: English or Spanish, and what kind of product is involved.

It's helpful and speeds up the call if the member can also provide the name and membership number of the person who purchased the item, product item number (printed on the receipt), the brand, model, serial number (found on the product) and date of purchase, and phone number for follow-up.

PV: Wait a minute. Shouldn't the manufacturers be able to answer questions on their own products?

FM: Many of our members were frustrated in dealing with overseas call centers and people who could not answer their technical questions, or they found they had to purchase a separate tech-support contract in order to get service running.

We felt this was just not right, so we got involved to champion the member, not a brand.

"I proceeded to tell her the situation, expecting to be shunted to a specialist in my particular TV. Not so: She directed me to turn on the TV [and] ... she fixed the problem. This Costco Concierge Service is a fantastic service to the public."

*Ed M.
Issaquah, WA*

PV: What are some of the free service perks of the program?

FM: Members are connected to a CCS tech-support representative—typically in less than 20 seconds, at our new state-of-the-art facility in Fort Myers, Florida. There's no animated voice you must try to interact with or punching hundreds of buttons to get to a live person. We walk each member through and stay on the phone as long as it takes to resolve the issue. We can even access a member's computer remotely to see what's going on.

PV: It's great that real people answer right away, but are they just phone sitters using up time until an expert is available?

FM: All CCS agents are expert-level technicians trained specifically to handle Costco products and provide easy-to-understand answers. Training is ongoing, syncing with new products or features as they arrive at Costco.

More than 74 percent of member concerns are resolved within the very first call, which says a lot about our agents providing an unparalleled level of best-in-class technical help.

"My call was quickly answered and was taken by Tom. Tom's professionalism and his clear knowledge of the product, his calm and reassuring manner, made this a wonderful customer service experience."

*Seymour S.
Boca Raton, FL*

PV: And if CCS can't answer a question?

FM: Agents have direct backdoor access to the manufacturer's tech support to find a solution. The call is made while the member and the CCS agent are on the line. CCS follow-ups continue until the issue is resolved.

PV: And CCS is not exclusive for Executive members?

FM: CCS red-carpet assistance is available to all Costco members residing in the U.S.

PV: What if I don't have the original receipt?

FM: Most manufacturers require this, but we can verify purchase through the membership number.



On the line

I CALLED COSTCO Concierge Services 10 times randomly over a five-day period. After selecting the language I wished (English or Spanish) and the type of product (television, computer, etc.), I was always transferred to a technician within one ring. They all provided their name and badge number and then asked for my phone number and how they could help. I was duly impressed.

The peace of mind in knowing that a courteous, tech-savvy person is just a quick phone call away and is available free for the lifetime of the product is what ultimately sealed the deal in Costco's favor when I recently purchased a new computer. Why would I buy one anywhere else?—PV

PV: What don't you do?

FM: CCS does not handle returns, nor do we authorize returns. We are tech support only. Returns are handled through the local warehouse membership desk or, if purchased online from Costco.com, at 1-800-955-2292.

We also don't send our agents to set up a product in the home or office. However, Costco.com does offer basic TV setup in many states for \$89.99.

PV: Do you have any tips for members when using CCS?

FM: You must be with the device you are calling about and have the time available to work through the problem. If you are not, CCS will need to set up a call-back time.

Also, make a record of all the product information when you first open the box. There is a perfect spot located on the CCS brochure for this.

PV: What's the value of Costco Concierge Services to members?

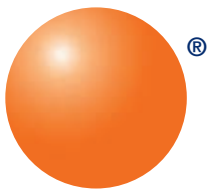
FM: Good technical support enables members to get the most from their investments in Costco electronics. We want to be the first, the last and the only ones that our members need to call.

If you buy something at Costco, you should be able to really use it to its fullest. Costco Concierge Services technical support makes sure this happens. ☑

Connecting

Costco Concierge Services brochures are available in the electronics areas in all warehouses and on Costco.com. Type "concierge" in the search box.

INVESTING TURNING YOUR LIFE UPSIDE DOWN



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- Great tax benefit for you and your employees
- 1/3 the cost of other traditional providers⁴
- As easy as running payroll with a few easy steps—we do the paperwork and file the IRS forms for you

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401(k)
Guide**

For more information, or to make a purchase, please call 1-877-813-5708



**Exclusive pricing for Costco members:
visit Costco.com and search 401KD**

Services provided by Intuit Payroll Services. Terms, conditions, pricing, features, functionality, service and support are subject to change at any time without notice. You must be a current Costco Member to qualify for Costco Member pricing for all services mentioned.

1 Based on data compiled by Hoovers, Inc., as of October 17, 2011.

2 Your 30 day free trial period begins when you run your first payroll. After the first 30 days, you will automatically be charged at the then-current monthly fee for the service level you have selected, until you cancel. Terms, conditions, pricing, features, service and support are subject to change without notice.

3 Intuit Online Payroll integrates with QuickBooks Pro and Premier 2006 & higher, Enterprise 8.0 & higher, QuickBooks Mac 2006 & higher, QuickBooks Online, Quicken Deluxe, Quicken Premier, Quicken Home & Business 2008 & higher and Quicken Mac 2007 & higher, Peachtree.

4 Cost Savings is based on publicly available pricing data for leading 401(k) plan providers and includes set-up fees and monthly administrative fees associated with sponsoring a 401(k) plan for a company with five employees. Data updated August 2011.

EXCITING NEW PRODUCTS

What's new

ARRIVING SOON AT COSTCO



A. White Gold Diamond and Ruby Pendant

The radiance of this approximately 0.5-carat ruby contrasts perfectly with the 11 diamonds, I color and VS2 clarity, totaling 0.16 ctw; set in a 14-karat white gold pendant. Item #565279. **Warehouse only.**

B. BookBook iPad Case and Compass Bundle This one-of-a-kind leather case doubles as a fully adjustable stand designed for all iPad models. The hardback cover and spine provide protection for rigorous travel, as well as disguised security with its vintage book design. Bundle also includes Compass, a stylish, compact folding stand that works as an easel and a typing stand. Item #605871. **Costco.com only.**

C. Starbucks® Caffè Verona K-Cups®

A full-bodied blend of Latin American and Asian-Pacific coffees, with Starbucks Italian Roast added for richness and balance, Caffè Verona features a dark cocoa texture and a roasty sweetness in the convenience of a K-Cup. Available in a 54-count portion pack. Item #584785. **Warehouse only.**

D. Contemporary Storage Cube with Bamboo Tray The stylish weave works in any décor; the versatile design allows it to be used as a side or coffee table. The top flips to provide a sturdy bamboo tray. Provides 2.2 cubic feet of storage. Also features a mocha-colored lined fabric interior. Item #539460. **Warehouse only.**

E. Mario Kart 7 Nintendo 3DS The newest installment of the Mario Kart franchise brings Mushroom Kingdom racing fun into glorious 3D. Explore new competitive kart possibilities, such as soaring through the skies or plunging into the depths of the sea. New courses, new strategic abilities and new customizable karts. Item #615463. **Warehouse and Costco.com.**

A Christmas classic

TO A HOLIDAY season filled with many traditions—Santa Claus, eggnog and mistletoe—add Kirkland Signature™ Peppermint Bark.

Layers of delicious dark and white chocolate coating are melted together to create a swirl effect. While the chocolate coating is still warm it is topped with crushed peppermint candy canes. Once the bark is cool it is broken into snack-size pieces.

“Our handmade peppermint bark is a Christmas classic that can be enjoyed during your holiday entertaining by the whole family,” says Costco buyer David Richman.

Kirkland Signature Peppermint Bark is made in the warehouse bakery and ready to serve right out of the tub at a great value. “Specialty retail sells peppermint bark at up to \$26 a pound; ours is \$5.50 a pound,” David points out. Item #36958. **Warehouse only.**



IRIDIO PHOTOGRAPHY



Chevrolet and GMC limited-time offer

Costco Auto Program presents significant savings on two of General Motors' most popular brands: Chevrolet and GMC.

Chevrolet models include Silverado, Suburban, Tahoe and Traverse. GMC models include Acadia, Sierra, Yukon and Yukon XL. (The 2011 Yukon was voted IntelliChoice's 2011 Best Overall Value of the Year.)

Costco members must register with the Costco Auto Program to receive an authorization number and PIN, and purchase and take delivery of a qualifying new Chevrolet or GMC model from a participating dealer between November 1, 2011 and January 3, 2012. They will receive:

- GM Preferred Pricing
- All publicly available manufacturer rebates and incentives
- A \$500 Costco Cash card after vehicle purchase and completion of a CAP satisfaction survey.

To take advantage of this limited-time offer, visit Costco.com and search "CHEVYGMC3," or call toll-free 1-800-895-0971.

To qualify for this offer you must have been a current Costco member as of October 31, 2011.
See website for full details.



E



F



D

F. Wood Poker Table This multifunction table features a reversible top so it can be used as a dining table, game/puzzle table and poker table. The poker tabletop has a felt surface, eight player positions, five poker chip slots per player and large removable cup holders to make cleaning easier. All-wood construction. 54" diameter. Item #589605. **Warehouse only.**

G. Solar Baskets with LED Candles

Powered by the sun, the flickering amber LEDs simulate the glow of a real candle without the risk of an open flame. The stylish-look PVC plastic in espresso brown is weather resistant. Lights automatically turn on at night and off at dawn. Set of two baskets. Rechargeable battery included. Item #925385. **Warehouse only.**



G

inside costco special events

Dates and events are subject to change. Special Events for other regions may be found on Costco.com; type "special events" into the search box.

New and exciting products available at warehouses for a limited time only

Click [here](#) for a list of special events by region.

ALASKA

Anchorage

Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel
Dec 14-24 Jewelry to Your Doorstep (JTYDS) jewelry

Anchorage II

Dec 1-11 JTYDS jewelry
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

IDAHO

Boise

Dec 2-11 Cashmere/wool wear
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel
Dec 16-24 Roma Designs jewelry

Coeur d'Alene

Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

Nampa

Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel
Dec 16-24 Traeger pellet grills

Pocatello

Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

Twin Falls

Dec 9-18 Traeger pellet grills
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

MONTANA

Billings

Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

Bozeman

Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel
Dec 19-31 Portable solar power
Dec 19-31 Traeger pellet grills

Helena

Dec 9-18 Portable solar power
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

Kalispell

Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

Missoula

Dec 9-18 Traeger pellet grills
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel
Dec 19-31 Portable solar power

OREGON

Albany

Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

Aloha

Dec 9-18 Massage chairs
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

Bend

Dec 9-18 Traeger pellet grills
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

Clackamas

Dec 2-11 Gunter Wilhelm cutlery
Dec 9-18 Traeger pellet grills
Dec 15-24 Lucky Clover jewelry

Eugene

Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

Hillsboro

Dec 2-11 Cashmere/wool wear
Dec 9-18 Portable solar power
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

Medford

Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel
Dec 16-25 Portable solar power

Portland

Dec 2-11 Cashmere/wool wear
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel
Dec 14-24 JTYDS jewelry

Roseburg

Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

Salem

Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

Tigard

Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel
Dec 16-24 Gunter Wilhelm cutlery
Dec 16-24 Roma Designs jewelry
Dec 19-Jan 1 Cashmere/wool wear

Warrenton

Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

Wilsonville

Dec 2-11 Lucky Clover jewelry
Dec 2-11 Traeger pellet grills
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel
Dec 19-Jan 4 Cashmere/wool wear

UTAH

Lehi

Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

Murray

Dec 9-18 Little Giant ladders
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel
Dec 15-24 Lucky Clover jewelry
Dec 19-Jan 4 Cashmere/wool wear

Ogden

Dec 2-11 Little Giant ladders
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

Orem

Dec 2-11 Traeger pellet grills
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel
Dec 15-24 Lucky Clover jewelry
Dec 23-Jan 1 Massage chairs

Salt Lake City

Dec 2-11 Cashmere/wool wear
Dec 2-11 Lucky Clover jewelry
Dec 9-18 Massage chairs
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel
Dec 12-24 Portable solar power

Sandy

Dec 2-11 Lucky Clover jewelry
Dec 9-18 Traeger pellet grills
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel
Dec 23-31 Gunter Wilhelm cutlery

West Bountiful

Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel
Dec 16-25 Portable solar power

WASHINGTON

Aurora Village

Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel
Dec 14-24 JTYDS jewelry
Dec 16-24 Traeger pellet grills
Dec 19-31 Portable solar power
Dec 19-31 Safes
Dec 19-Jan 1 Cashmere/wool wear

Bellingham

Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel
Dec 16-24 Artune jewelry
Dec 16-24 Traeger pellet grills

Burlington

Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel
Dec 12-24 Portable solar power

Clarkston

Dec 9-18 Portable solar power
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

Covington

Dec 2-11 Cashmere/wool wear
Dec 9-18 Little Giant ladders
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

East Wenatchee

Dec 9-18 Portable solar power
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

Everett

Dec 9-18 Gunter Wilhelm cutlery
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel
Dec 19-Jan 4 Cashmere/wool wear

Federal Way

Dec 2-11 Traeger pellet grills
Dec 9-14 Collegiate apparel
Dec 16-24 Portable solar power

Gig Harbor

Dec 1-11 JTYDS jewelry
Dec 9-14 Gunter Wilhelm cutlery
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel
Dec 19-Jan 4 Cashmere/wool wear

Issaquah

Dec 2-11 Cashmere/wool wear
Dec 12-24 Collegiate apparel
Dec 16-24 Roma Designs jewelry
Dec 27-Jan 8 Gunter Wilhelm cutlery

featured event



Dowdle Puzzles Collectible Dowdle folk-art puzzles will be available at most warehouses from December 15 through January 8. Article on page 49.

Kennewick

Dec 2-11 Portable solar power
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

Kirkland

Dec 1-11 JTYDS jewelry
Dec 2-11 Cashmere/wool wear
Dec 2-11 Traeger pellet grills
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel
Dec 16-24 Gunter Wilhelm cutlery

Lacey

Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel
Dec 12-24 Portable solar power

Marysville

Dec 9-18 Little Giant ladders
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

Puyallup

Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel
Dec 19-31 Safes

Seattle

Dec 2-11 Cashmere/wool wear
Dec 9-18 Massage chairs
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel
Dec 15-24 Lucky Clover jewelry
Dec 19-31 Portable solar power

Sequim

Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

Silverdale

Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel
Dec 15-24 Telesto Designs jewelry
Dec 16-24 Gunter Wilhelm cutlery
Dec 16-24 Traeger pellet grills

Spokane

Dec 2-11 Portable solar power
Dec 9-18 Traeger pellet grills
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

Tacoma

Dec 2-11 Lucky Clover jewelry
Dec 9-18 Traeger pellet grills
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

Tukwila

Dec 1-11 Telesto Designs jewelry
Dec 9-18 Traeger pellet grills
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel
Dec 30-Jan 8 Safes

Tumwater

Dec 2-11 Traeger pellet grills
Dec 9-18 Portable solar power
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

Union Gap

Dec 9-18 Portable solar power
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

E Vancouver

Dec 2-11 Traeger pellet grills
Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel

Woodinville

Dec 9-24 Collegiate apparel
Dec 16-26 Massage chairs

warehouse hours

Monday-Friday 10am-8:30pm
Saturday 9:30am-6pm
Sunday 10am-6pm

Costco.com open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Additional Services

Costco Auto Program. 1-800-800-9288;
www.costcoauto.com
Fife and Lynnwood, WA, Business Centers, Print & Copy Centers. Delivery to businesses, more business products. Open to all Costco members. 1-800-788-9968

specialty services

at your local warehouse or business center

ALASKA

	1-Hour Photo	Auto Program	Business Delivery	Car Wash	Costco.com Kiosk	Gas Station	Hearing Aids	Ink Cartridge Refill	Optical	Print & Copy Ctr.	Service Deli
Anchorage	•	•	•			•			•	•	•
Anchorage II	•	•	•			•			•	•	•
Juneau											

IDAHO

	1-Hour Photo	Auto Program	Business Delivery	Car Wash	Costco.com Kiosk	Gas Station	Hearing Aids	Ink Cartridge Refill	Optical	Print & Copy Ctr.	Service Deli
Boise	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Coeur d'Alene	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Nampa	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Pocatello	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Twin Falls	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•

MONTANA

	1-Hour Photo	Auto Program	Business Delivery	Car Wash	Costco.com Kiosk	Gas Station	Hearing Aids	Ink Cartridge Refill	Optical	Print & Copy Ctr.	Service Deli
Billings	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Bozeman	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Helena	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Kalispell	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Missoula	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•

OREGON

	1-Hour Photo	Auto Program	Business Delivery	Car Wash	Costco.com Kiosk	Gas Station	Hearing Aids	Ink Cartridge Refill	Optical	Print & Copy Ctr.	Service Deli
Albany	•	•	JTYDS		•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Aloha	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Bend	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Clackamas	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Eugene	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Hillsboro	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Medford	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Portland	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Roseburg	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Salem	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Tigard	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Warrenton	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Wilsonville	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•

UTAH

	1-Hour Photo	Auto Program	Business Delivery	Car Wash	Costco.com Kiosk	Gas Station	Hearing Aids	Ink Cartridge Refill	Optical	Print & Copy Ctr.	Service Deli
Lehi	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Murray	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Ogden	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Orem	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
St. George	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Salt Lake City	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Sandy	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
West Bountiful	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
West Valley	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•

WASHINGTON

	1-Hour Photo	Auto Program	Business Delivery	Car Wash	Costco.com Kiosk	Gas Station	Hearing Aids	Ink Cartridge Refill	Optical	Print & Copy Ctr.	Service Deli
Aurora Village	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Bellingham	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Burlington	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Clarkston	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Covington	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
East Wenatchee	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Everett	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Federal Way	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Fife Business Center	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Gig Harbor	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Issaquah	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Kennewick	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Kirkland	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Lacey	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Lynnwood Business Ctr.	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Marysville	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Puyallup	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Seattle	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Sequim	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•

COSTCO SERVICES

Update

To learn more about our complete suite of Costco services, click on the "Services" link at Costco.com or call toll-free 1-800-220-6000.

NEW SERVICE

Home and office water delivery

HERE'S A CONVENIENT new service from Costco: water delivery for your home and office.

Costco is ready to set up regular delivery of 5-gallon bottles of water to your business or home address every two weeks.

- ❖ Executive Members pay \$15.99 per four-week billing period for three 5-gallon bottles.

- ❖ Gold Star/Business members pay \$17.40 per four-week billing period for three 5-gallon bottles.

- ❖ Executive Members receive two free cases of water (24 0.5-liter bottles) on each anniversary of their water-service agreement.

Brands of water delivered through this program include Alhambra, Belmont Springs, Crystal Springs, Hinckley Springs, Mount Olympus, Sierra Springs and Sparkletts, depending on your service area.

Executive Members can save as much as \$120 per year compared to average



national prices. For more information, visit Costco.com and search "DSWATER2," or call toll-free 1-888-432-4823.

Note: This service does not include a bottled water cooler, which can be found in the warehouses and on Costco.com.

PRACTICAL TIP

Safe, burglar-free holidays

DURING THE BUSY holiday season, homes are often left unattended for extended periods of time. Burglaries tend to increase as thieves anticipate empty homes. Attention to home security can make a difference and deter break-ins.

In addition to locking doors and windows, to help prevent a burglary you can also:

- ❖ Turn lights on and off using a timer.
- ❖ Leave on a radio or television.
- ❖ Let trusted neighbors know when you'll be away and ask them to take in newspapers and mail, and to remove snow.
- ❖ Make sure valuables and gifts are not visible through windows.
- ❖ Don't mention being away on social media websites.

An additional protective measure is to review your insurance to make sure you are adequately covered in the event of a loss. To learn more or get a quote from the Costco insurance program through Ameriprise Auto & Home Insurance, call toll-free 1-888-404-5365.

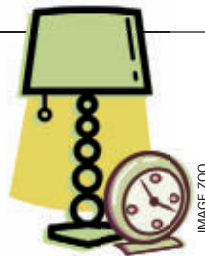


IMAGE ZOO

NEW SERVICE

Full-service payroll from Intuit

NEW FROM COSTCO'S PAYROLL service provider is Intuit Full Service Payroll. Intuit is the leader in small-business payroll processing, with more than 1 million customers.

With this new service you just enter the hours and Intuit does the rest. Payroll checks and payroll taxes are guaranteed to be accurate. Your account will be managed by a dedicated payroll expert, available for one-on-one guidance when you submit employee hours online.

There are no hidden costs and no surprises. Executive Members pay a monthly fee of \$84.99 plus \$1.80 per employee. Gold Star and Business members pay a monthly fee of \$89.99 plus \$2 per employee.

For more information or to get started, go to Costco.com and search "Payroll12," or call toll-free 1-877-813-5708.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

GM Preferred Pricing on select Chevrolet and GMC models. See details on page 83.



2012 GMC Sierra Crew Cab SLT

COURTESY GMC

SAVINGS EVENT

December coupons save on services

WATCH FOR THE LATEST Costco coupon book to hit your mailbox. In it, you will find exclusive offers on several services for Costco members, including ShareBuilder online investing from

MORE THAN \$1,800 IN MEMBER-ONLY SAVINGS

MORTGAGE AND REFINANCING

SAVE UP TO \$5,000 OVER THE LIFE OF THE LOAN.*

Participating lenders have been carefully selected to offer exclusive rates and savings on lender fees to Costco members.

Visit Costco.com and search: Home Loans

FIRST CHOICE BANK **FDIC**

*Not valid for 1504 for routine rates. Data rates may apply.

ING DIRECT Investing, identity protection from Identity Guard, mortgage and refinancing services from First Choice Bank, an EHR and PM solution for healthcare providers from Etransmedia (see story on page 71) and new-car purchases from GMC and Chevrolet through the Costco Auto Program.

Coupon offers for auto insurance from Ameriprise and payroll services from Intuit are limited to certain regions.

Check the coupons for full details. Most offers are valid from December 1 to December 18, 2011. The Chevrolet and GMC offer is valid until January 3, 2012.

All services are provided by third parties, may not be available in all areas and are subject to change without notice. Some restrictions apply. See "Services" at Costco.com for applicable terms and conditions.

Pressed *for* success

IN 2005, MY SISTER, Theresa, and I opened All Seasons Floral Preservation (www.allseasonspressed.com), where we press, preserve and create custom-designed framed floral art with wedding and other special-occasion flowers. Theresa is a pressed-flower artist and I do all of the customer service and marketing for our company. The Costco Photo Center has become an integral part of running our business.



Mary Beth
Lopresti (left)
and Theresa
Hambleton

■ When we receive a bouquet or arrangement for pressing, we take photos from several different angles to document what the flowers looked like upon arrival. Next, the bouquet and its flowers are taken apart and carefully pressed. Theresa then reassembles the flowers and creates the floral design using the photos as a guide.

■ Often, clients choose to have a photo included with the flowers in the design. They can just email me the photo and I send it off to Costco for printing.

■ Once the artwork is completed, we take a finished photo to send along to the florist who created the original bouquet or arrangement. The florists love seeing how their floral design has become a work of art their client can enjoy forever.

I can't imagine how cumbersome this aspect of our work would be without the great service of the Photo Center: The photos are high quality, the customer service is great and the price can't be beat.—*Mary Beth Lopresti*

We want to hear from you!

IF YOU HAVE A NOTE, photo or story to share about Costco or Costco members, email it to connection@costco.com with "The Member Connection" in the subject line or send it to "The Member Connection," *The Costco Connection*, P.O. Box 34088, Seattle, WA 98124-1088. Submissions cannot be acknowledged or returned.



Karen Conroy

The fund starts here

FIVE YEARS AGO, Costco member Karen Conroy, then 40, walked the Susan G. Komen 3-Day for the Cure for her sister, who was diagnosed with breast cancer. Seeing a great need for a fundraising alternative to aid those unable to raise the \$2,300 fee, she founded Fundraising For a Cause (www.fundraisingforacause.com) to let people purchase, at wholesale prices, items such as pink bracelets, coffee cups, buttons, etc. that they could then sell at a profit to fund their charity.

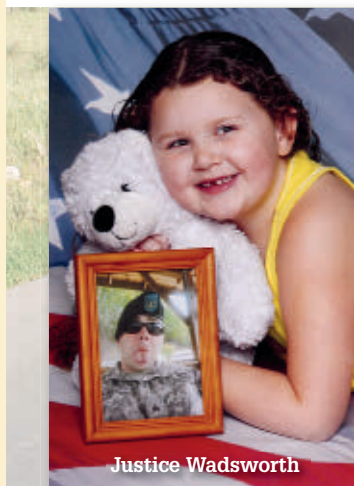
She notes, "It's hard for people to write a \$20 check, but they will give \$20 for a bracelet that cost you \$4."

What started as a home operation, with 15 pink-ribbon items, is now a full-fledged warehouse-run business with 10 employees, products representing more than 300 causes and clients as far away as Australia and Trinidad.

The website receives about 2,500 hits per day (5,000 during Breast Cancer Awareness Month). Along with products offered at wholesale prices for resale, the site also features a retail section for people who want to buy a single item. Conroy publishes a sliding scale on her website's wholesale pages to demonstrate to customers what they could make purchasing fundraising items in bulk.

Additionally, proceeds from the retail store are donated to various charities.

And through January, Conroy has a special promotion for Costco members. "At checkout, if members put in the word 'Costco' in the discount coupon code field, 15 percent will be taken off their entire order—regardless of how much they order."—*Krista Fisher*



Justice Wadsworth

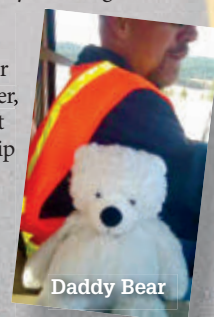
Justice gets her due

WASHINGTON STATE Department of Transportation workers and Costco members Terry Kukes and Harry Nelson were working a routine shift when they received a frantic call. A 6-year-old girl, Justice Wadsworth, had lost her stuffed bear on Interstate 90, somewhere between eastern and western Washington, when the family had pulled over for a rest.

This wasn't just any stuffed animal. Justice's father, who serves in the military, had given it to her when she was 2, just before he was deployed to Afghanistan. The bear was their bond.

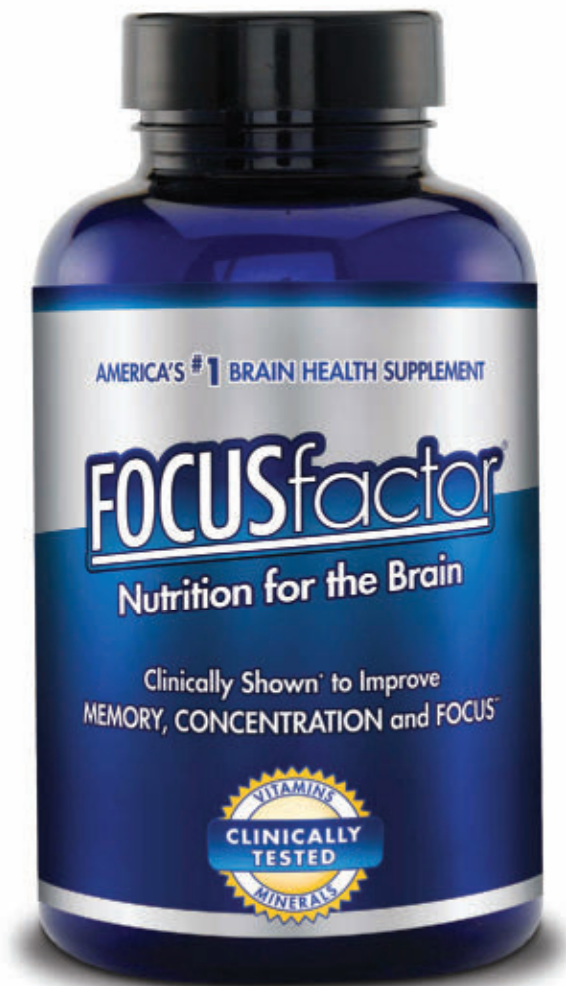
The two veteran highway workers determined Daddy Bear had to have been lost between mileposts 93 and 101. About an hour later, they found it in bushes just off the shoulder. When their work shift ended, Kukes and Nelson drove to Sedro-Woolley, Washington, a trip of almost four hours, to bring Daddy Bear home to Justice.

"What they did was absolutely awesome," says Patty Sweeney, Justice's grandmother. "They certainly didn't have to go out and take their time to look for a teddy bear, of all things. To them it could have been something that could easily be replaced. But to Justice, it couldn't be replaced."—*Steve Fisher*



Daddy Bear

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*This statement has not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration.
This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

For more information, visit focusfactor.com.

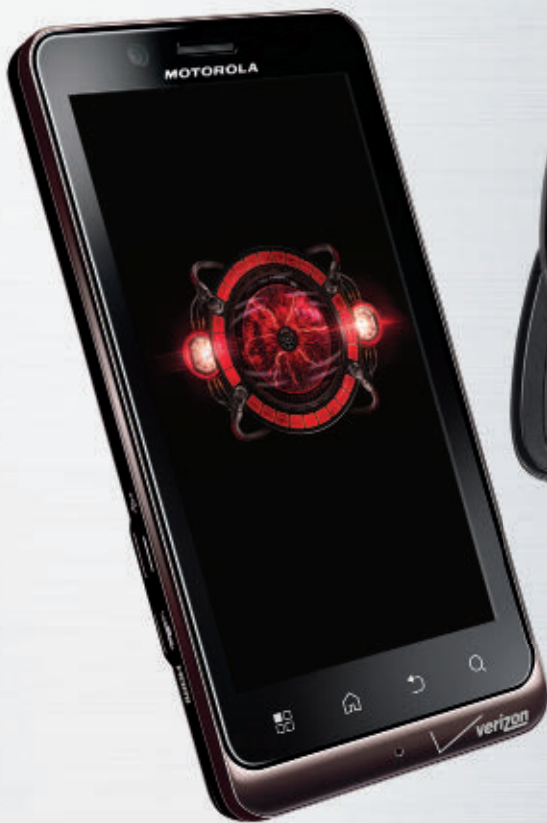


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Visit the Costco Wireless Kiosk or Costco.com for complete details.

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Members receive a service credit for up to \$35 new activation fee after mail-in rebate. Credit if applicable will be applied on the second full billing cycle. Verizon not available in AK or PR.

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